CŒLEBS

IN SEARCH OF A WIFE.

VOL. II.

Cafajo Regal 1827

CŒLEBS

IN SEARCH OF A WIFE.

COMPREHENDING

OBSERVATIONS

ON

DOMESTIC HABITS AND MANNERS, RELIGION AND MORALS.

For not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom. *Milton.*

THE EIGHTH EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CŒLEBS.

CHAP. XXVII.

In the morning Mr. Stanley, Sir John Belfield and I took a walk to call on our valuable rector. On our return home, amidst that sort of desultory conversation which a walk often produces,—"Since we left the parsonage, sir," said I, addressing myself to Mr. Stanley, "I have been thinking how little justice has been done to the clerical character in those popular works of imagination which are intended to exhibit a picture of living manners. There are, indeed, a very few happy exceptions. Yet I cannot but regret that so many fair occasions have been lost of advancing the interests of re-

ligion by personifying her amiable graces in the character of her ministers. I allude not to the attack of the open infidel, nor the sly insinuation of the concealed sceptic, nor do I advert to the broad assault of the enemy of good government, who, falling foul of every established institution, would naturally be expected to show little favour to the ministers of the church. But I advert to those less prejudiced and less hostile writers, who having as I would hope, no political nor moral motive for undermining the order, would rather desire to be considered as among its friends and advocates."

"I understand you," replied Mr. Stanley. "I believe that this is often done not from any disrespect to the sacred function, nor from any wish to depreciate an order which even common sense and common prudence, without the intervention of religion, tell us cannot be set in too respectable a light. I believe it commonly arises from

from a different cause. The writer himself having but a low idea of the requirements of Christianity, is consequently neither able nor willing to affix a very elevated standard for the character of its ministers. Some of these writers, however, describe a clergyman, in general terms, as a paragon of piety, but they seldom make him act up to the description with which he sets out. He is represented, in the gross, as adorned with all the attributes of perfection, but when he comes to be drawn out in detail he is found to exhibit little of that superiority which had been ascribed to him in the lump. You are told how religious he is, but when you come to hear him converse, you are not always quite certain whether he professes the religion of the Shaster or the Bible. You hear of his moral excellence, but you find him adopting the maxims of the world, and living in the pursuits of ordinary men. In short, you will find, "that he has little of the clergyman, except the name."

 A sen-

"A sensible little work of fiction," replied I, "lately fell in my way. Among its characters was that of a grave divine. From the strain of panegyric bestowed on him, I expected to have met with a rival to the fathers of the primitive church. He is presented as a model, and, indeed he counsels, he exhorts, he reproves, he instructs,—but he goes to a masquerade."

"This assimilation of general piety," said Mr. Stanley, "with occasional conformity to the practice of the gay world, I should fear would produce two ill effects. It will lower the professional standard to the young reader while he is perusing the ideal character, and the comparison will dispose him to accuse of forbidding strictness the pious clergyman of real life. After having been entertained with the mixture of religion and laxity in the imaginary divine whom he has been following from the serious lecture to the scene of revelry, will he not be naturally disposed to accuse

accuse of moroseness the existing divine who blends no such contradictions?

"But the evil of which I more particularly complain," continued he, "because it exists in works universally read, and written, indeed, with a life and spirit which make them both admired and remembered, is found in the ingenious and popular novels of the witty class. In some of these, even where the author intends to give a favourable representation of a clergyman, he more frequently exhibits him for the purpose of merriment than for that of instruction."

"I confess with shame," said Sir John, "that the spirit, fire, and knowlege of mankind, of the writers to whom you allude, have made me too generally indulgent to their gross pictures of life, and to the loose morals of their good men."

"*Good men!*" said Mr. Stanley, "After reading some of those works in the early part of my life, I amused myself with the idea that I should like to inter-

weave the character of a *Christian* among the heroes of Fielding and Smollet, as the shortest way of proving their *good men* to be worthless fellows; and to shew how little their admired characters rise, in point of morals, above the heroes of the Beggar's Opera.

"Knowlege of the world," continued he, "should always be used to mend the world. A writer employs this knowlege honestly when he points out the snares and pitfalls of vice. But when he covers those snares and pitfalls with flowers, when he fascinates in order that he may corrupt, when he engages the affections by polluting them, I know not how a man can do a deeper injury to society, or more fatally inflame his own future reckoning."

"But to return to our more immediate subject," said I, "I cannot relish their singling out the person of a pious clergyman as a peculiarly proper vehicle for the display of humour. Why qualities which excite ridicule should be necessarily

blended

blended with such as command esteem, is what I have never been able to comprehend."

"Even where the characters," replied Mr. Stanley, "having been so pleasingly delineated as to attract affection by their worth and benevolence, there is always a drawback from their respectability by some trait that is ludicrous, some situation that is unclerical, some incident that is absurd. There is a contrivance to expose them to some awkward distress; there is some palpable weakness to undo the effect of their general example, some impropriety of conduct, some gross error in judgment, some excess of simplicity, which by infallibly diminishing the dignity, weakens the influence of the character, and of course lessens the veneration of the reader."

"I have often," replied I, "felt that though we may love the man we laugh at, we shall never reverence him. We may like him as a companion, but we shall never look up to him as an instructor."

 "I know

"I know no reason," observed Mr. Stanley, "why a pious divine may not have as much wit and humour as any other man. And we have it on the word of the wittiest of the whole body, Dr. South, that "piety does not necessarily involve dullness." An author may lawfully make his churchman as witty as he pleases, or rather as witty as he can: but he should never make him the butt of the wit of other men, which is, in fact, making him the butt of his own wit. What is meant to be a *comical parson* is no respectable or prudent exhibition; nor with the utmost stretch of candour, can I believe that the motive of the exhibitor is always of the purest kind.

"How far," continued Mr. Stanley, "authors have found it necessary to add these diverting appendages, in order to qualify piety; how far they have been obliged to dilute religion, so as to make it palatable and pardonable, I will not pretend to decide. But whether such a mixture

mixture be not calculated to leave a lasting effect on the mind, unfavourable to the clerical character; whether these associations are not injurious even to religion itself, let those declare, if they will speak honestly, who have been accustomed to be excessively delighted with such combinations."

"I am a little afraid," returned Sir John, "that I have formerly in some degree fallen under this censure. But surely, Stanley, you would not think it right to lavish *undue* praise, even on characters of a better stamp; you would not commend ordinary merit highly, and above all you would not, I presume, screen the faults of the worthless?"

"I am as far from insisting," replied he, "on the universal piety of the Clergy, as for bespeaking reverence for the unworthy individual; all that I contend for is, that no arts should ever be employed to discredit the *order*.—The abettors of revolutionary principles, a few years ago, had the

 acuteness

acuteness to perceive, that so to discredit it was one of their most powerful engines. Had not that spirit been providentially extinguished, they would have done more mischief to religion by their artful mode of introducing degrading pictures of our national instructors, in their popular tracts, than the Hobbes's and the Bolingbrokes had done by blending irreligion with their philosophy, or the Voltaires and the Gibbons by interweaving it into their history. Whatever is mixed up with our amusements is swallowed with more danger because with more pleasure, and less suspicion than any thing which comes under a grave name and more serious shape."

"I presume," said Sir John, "you do not mean to involve in your censure the exquisitely keen satires of Erasmus on the ecclesiastics of his day: and I remember that you yourself could never read without delight the pointed wit of Boileau against the spiritual voluptuaries of his time, in his admirable *Lutrin*. Perhaps you are

not

not disposed to give the same quarter to the pleasant ridicule of Le Sage?"

"We justify ourselves as good protestants," rejoined Mr. Stanley, "for pardoning the severe but just attacks of the reformer and the poet on the vices of a corrupt church. Though, to speak the truth, I am not quite certain that even these two discriminating and virtuous authors did not, especially Erasmus, now and then indulge themselves in a sharpness which seemed to bear upon religion itself, and not merely on the luxury and idleness of its degenerate ministers. As to Le Sage, who, with all his wit, I should never have thought of bringing into such good company, he was certainly withheld by no restraints either moral or religious. And it is obvious to me, that he seems rather gratified, that he had the faults to expose, than actuated by an honest zeal, by exposing to correct them."

"I wish I could say," replied Sir John, "that the Spanish Friar of Dryden, and

the witty Opera of the living Dryden, did not fall under the same suspicion. I have often observed, that as Lucian dashes with equal wit and equal virulence at every religion, of every name, and every nation, so Dryden with the same diffusive zeal attacks the ministers of every religion. In ransacking muftis, monks, and prelates to confirm his favorite position,

That priests of all religions are the same,

he betrays a secret wish to intimate that not only the priests of all religions, but the religions of all priests are pretty much alike."

"He has, however," said Mr. Stanley, made a sort of palinode, by his consummately beautiful poem of the *good parson*. Yet even this lovely picture he could not allow himself to complete without a fling at the order, which he declares, at the conclusion, he only spares for the sake of one exception."

"Rousseau,"

"Rousseau," said Sir John, "seems to be the only sceptic, who has not, in this respect, acted unfairly. His Savoyard Vicar is represented as a grave, consistent and exemplary character."

"True," replied Mr. Stanley. "But don't you perceive why he is so represented? He is exhibited as a model of goodness, in order to exalt the scanty faith and unsound doctrines of which he is made the teacher."

"I would not," continued he, "call that man an enemy to the church who should reprobate characters who are a dishonour to it. But the just though indignant biographer of a real Sterne, or a real Churchill, exhibits a very different spirit, and produces a very different effect from the painter of an imaginary *Thwackum* or *Supple*. In the historian concealment would be blameable, and palliation mischievous. He fairly exposes the individual without wishing to bring any reproach on the profession. What I blame is, employ-

ing the vehicle of fiction for the purpose of blackening, or in any degree discrediting, a body of men, who depend much upon the success of their labours on public opinions; and on the success of whose labours depends so large a portion of the public virtue."

"I have sometimes," said I, "heard my father express his surprise that the most engaging of all writers, Mr. Addison, a man so devout himself, so forward to do honour to religion on all occasions, should have let slip so fair an opportunity for exalting the value of a country clergyman as the description of Sir Roger de Coverley's chaplain naturally put into his hands*."

"You must allow," said Sir John, "that he has made him worthy, and that he has not made him absurd."

"I grant it," replied I, "but he has made him dull and acquiescent. He has made him any thing rather than a pattern."

"But what I most regret," said Mr.

* See Spectator, Vol. ii. No. 107.

Stanley.

Stanley, "is that the use he has made of this character is to give the stamp of his own high authority to a practice which though it is characteristically recommended by the whimsical knight, whose original vein of humour leave every other far behind it, yet should never have had the sanction of the author of the Saturday pieces in the Spectator—I mean, the practice of the minister of a little country parish preaching to farmers and peasants the most learned, logical, and profound discourses in the English language."

"It has, I believe," replied Sir John, "excited general wonder that so consummate a judge of propriety should have commended as suitable instruction for illiterate villagers, the sermons of those incomparable scholars Fleetwood, South, Tillotson, Barrow, Calamy, and Saunderson."

"But this is not the worst," said Mr. Stanley, "for Mr. Addison not only clearly approves it in the individual in-

 stance,

stance, but takes occasion from it to establish a general rule and indefinitely to advise the country clergy to adopt the custom of preaching these same discourses, '*instead of wasting their spirits in laborious compositions of their own.*'"

"Surely," replied I, "an enemy of religion could not easily have devised a more effectual method for thinning the village church, or lessening the edification of the unlettered auditor, than this eminent advocate for Christianity has here incautiously suggested."

"I am sorry," said Mr. Stanley, "that such a man has given such a sanction for reducing religious instruction to little more than a form, and for seeming to consider the mere act of attending public worship as the sole end of its institution, without sufficiently taking into the account the nature and the importance of the instruction itself; and without considering that nothing can be edifying which is not intelligible. Besides, it is not only pre-

venting

venting the improvement of the people, but checking that of the preacher. It not only puts a bar to his own advancement in the art of teaching, but retards that growth in piety which might have been promoted in himself while he was preparing in secret to promote that of his hearers."

"And yet, replied Sir John, "to speak honestly, I am afraid, had I been the patron, I should have been so gratified myself with hearing those fine compositions, that I could not heartily have blamed my chaplain for preaching no other."

"My dear Sir John," said Mr. Stanley, "neither your good sense, nor your good nature would, I am persuaded, allow you to purchase your own gratification at the expence of a whole congregation. You, a man of learning and of leisure, can easily supply any deficiency of ability in plain but useful sermons. But how would the tenants, the workmen and the servants, (for of such at least was Sir Roger's congregation composed,) how would those who

have

have little other means of edification indemnify themselves for the loss of that single opportunity which the whole week affords them? Is not that a most inequitable way of proportioning instruction which, while it pleases or profits the well-informed individual, cuts off the instruction of the multitude? If we may twist a text from its natural import, is it 'rightly dividing the word of truth' to feast the patron and starve the parish?"

CHAP. XXVIII.

Though Mr. Stanley had checked my impetuosity in my application to him, and did not encourage my addresses with a promptitude suited to the ardour of my affection, yet as the warmth of my attachment, notwithstanding I made it a duty to restrain its outward expression, could not escape either his penetration, or that of his admirable wife, they began a little to relax in the strictness with which they had avoided speaking of their daughter. They never indeed introduced the subject themselves, yet it some how or other never failed to find its way into all conversation in which I was one of the interlocutors.

Sitting one day in Lucilla's bower with Mrs. Stanley, and speaking, though in general terms, on the subject nearest my heart, with a tenderness and admiration as sincere

cere as it was fervent, I dwelt particularly on some instances which I had recently heard from Edwards, of her tender attention to the sick poor, and her zeal in often visiting them, without regard to weather, or the accommodation of a carriage.

"I assure you," said Mrs. Stanley, "you over-rate her. Lucilla is no prodigy dropped down from the clouds. Ten thousand other young women, with natural good sense, and good temper, might, with the same education, the same neglect of what is useless and the same attention to what is necessary, acquire the same habits and the same principles. Her being no prodigy, however, perhaps makes her example, as far as it goes, more important. She may be more useful, because she carries not that discouraging superiority, which others might be deterred from imitating, through hopelessness to reach. If she is not a miracle whom others might despair to emulate, she is a Christian whom every girl of a fair understanding and good disposition may

may equal, and whom, I hope and believe, many girls excel."

I asked Mrs. Stanley's permission to attend the young ladies in one of their benevolent rounds. "When I have leisure to be of the party," replied she, smiling, "you shall accompany us. I am afraid to trust your warm feelings. Your good nature would perhaps lead you to commend as a merit, what in fact deserves no praise at all, the duty being so obvious, and so indispensable. I have often heard it regretted that ladies have no stated employment, no profession. It is a mistake. *Charity is the calling of a lady; the care of the poor is her profession.* Men have little time or taste for details. Women of fortune have abundant leisure, which can in no way be so properly or so pleasantly filled up, as in making themselves intimately acquainted with the worth, and the wants of all within their reach. With their wants, because it is their bounden duty to administer to them; with their worth, because

without

without this knowlege they cannot administer prudently and appropriately."

I expressed to Mrs. Stanley the delight with which I had heard of the admirable regulations of her family, in the management of the poor, and how much their power of doing good was said to be enlarged by the judgment and discrimination with which it was done.

"We are far from thinking," replied she, "that our charity should be limited to our own immediate neighbourhood. We are of opinion, that it should not be left undone any where, but that *there* it should be done indispensably. We consider our own parish as our more appropriate field of action, where Providence, by 'fixing the bounds of our habitation,' seems to have made us peculiarly responsible for the comfort of those whom he has doubtless placed around us for that purpose. It is thus that the Almighty vindicates his justice, or rather calls on us to vindicate it. It is thus he explains why

he

he admits natural evil into the world, by making the wants of one part of the community an exercise for the compassion of the other.

"Surely, added Mrs. Stanley, "the reason is particularly obvious, why the bounty of the affluent ought to be most liberally, though not exclusively, extended to the spot whence they derive their revenues. There seems indeed to be a double motive for it. The same act involves a duty both to God and to man. The largest bounty to the necessitous on our estates, is rather justice than charity. 'Tis but a kind of pepper-corn acknowlegement to the great Lord and proprietor of all, from whom we hold them. And to assist their own labouring poor is a kind of natural debt, which persons who possess great landed property owe to those from the sweat of whose brow they derive their comforts, and even their riches. 'Tis a commutation, in which, as the advantage is greatly on

our side, so is our duty to diminish the difference of paramount obligation."

I then repeated my request, that I might be allowed to take a practical lesson in the next periodical visit to the cottagers.

Mrs. Stanley replied, "As to my girls, the elder ones, I trust, are such veterans in their trade, that your approbation can do them no harm, nor do they stand in need of it as an incentive. But should the little ones find that their charity procures them praise, they might perhaps be charitable for the sake of praise, their benevolence might be set at work by their vanity, and they might be led to do that from the love of applause, which can only please God, when the principle is pure. *The iniquity of our holy things*, my good friend, requires much Christian vigilance. Next to not giving at all, the greatest fault is to give from ostentation. The contest is only between two sins. The motive robs the act of the very name of virtue, while the good work that is paid

in

is praise, is stripped of the hope of higher retribution."

On my assuring Mrs. Stanley, that I thought such an introduction to their systematic schemes of charity might inform my own mind and improve my habits, she consented, and I have since been a frequent witness of their admirable method; and have been studying plans, which involve the good both of body and soul. Oh! if I am ever blest with a coadjutress, a directress, let me rather say, formed under such auspices, with what delight shall I transplant the principles and practices of Stanley Grove to the Priory! Nor indeed would I ever marry but with the animating hope that not only myself, but all around me, would be the better and happier for the presiding genius I shall place there.

Sir John Belfield had joined us while we were on this topic. I had observed sometimes that though he was earnest on the general principle of benevolence

which he considered as a most imperious duty, or, as he said in his warm way, as so lively a pleasure, that he was almost ready to suspect if it *were* a duty; yet I was sorry to find that his generous mind had not viewed this large subject under all its aspects. He had not hitherto regarded it as a matter demanding any thing but money; while time, inquiry, discrimination, system, he confessed he had not much taken into the account. He did a great deal of good; but had not allowed himself time or thought for the best way of doing it. Charity, as opposed to hardheartedness and covetousness, he warmly exercised; but when, with a willing liberality, he had cleared himself from the suspicion of those detestable vices, he was indolent in the proper distribution of money, and somewhat negligent of its just application. Nor had he ever considered, as every man should do, because every man's means are limited, how the greatest quantity of good could be done with any given sum.

But

But the worst of all was, he had imbibed certain popular prejudices respecting the more *religious* charities; prejudices altogether unworthy of his enlightened mind. He too much limited his ideas of bounty to bodily wants. This distinction was not with him, as it is with many, invented as an argument for saving his money, which he most willingly bestowed for feeding and cloathing the necessitous. But as to the propriety of affording them religious instruction, he owned he had not made up his mind. He had some doubts whether it were a duty. Whether it were a benefit he had still stronger doubts; adding, that he should begin to consider the subject more attentively than he had yet done.

Mrs. Stanley in reply said, "I am but a poor casuist, Sir John, and I must refer you to Mr. Stanley for abler arguments than I can use. I will venture however to say, that even on your own ground it appears to be a pressing duty. If sin be

the cause of so large a portion of the miseries of human life, must not that be the noblest charity which cures, or lessens, or prevents sin? And are not they the truest benefactors even to the bodies of men, who by their religious exertions to prevent the corruption of vice, prevent also, in some measure that poverty and disease which are the natural concomitants of vice? If in endeavouring to make men better, by the infusion of a religious principle which shall check idleness, drinking, and extravagance, we put them in the way to become healthier, and richer, and happier, it will furnish a practical argument which I am sure will satisfy your benevolent heart.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIX.

Mr. Tyrrel and his nephew called on us in the evening, and interrupted a pleasant and useful conversation on which we were just entering.

"Do you know, Stanley," said Mr. Tyrrel, "that you have absolutely corrupted my nephew, by what passed at your house the other day in favour of reading. He has ever since been ransacking the shelves for idle books."

"I should be seriously concerned," replied Mr. Stanley, "if any thing I had said should have drawn Mr. Edward off from more valuable studies, or diverted him from the important pursuit of religious knowlege."

"Why to do him justice, and you too," resumed Mr. Tyrrel, "he has since that conversation begun assiduously to devote his mornings to serious reading, and it is only an hour's leisure in the evening,

 which

which he used to trifle away, that he gives to books of taste; but I had rather he would let them all alone. The best of them will only fill his heart with cold morality, and stuff his head with romance and fiction. I would not have a religious man ever look into a book of your *belles lettres* nonsense; and if he be really religious, he will make a general bonfire of the poets."

"That is rather too sweeping a sentence," said Mr. Stanley. "It would, I grant you, have been a benefit to mankind, if the entire works of some celebrated poets, and a considerable portion of the works of many not quite so exceptionable, were to assist the conflagration of your pile."

"And if fuel failed," said Sir John Belfield, "we might not only rob Belinda's altar of her

Twelve tomes of French romances neatly gilt,

but feed the flame with countless marble-covered octavos from the modern school. But having made this concession, allow me

me to observe, that because there has been a voluptuous Petronius, a profane Lucretius, and a licentious Ovid, to say nothing of the numberless modern poets, or rather individual poems, that are immoral and corrupt—shall we therefore exclude all works of imagination from the library of a young man? Surely we should not indiscriminately banish the Muses, as infallible corruptors of the youthful mind; I would rather consider a blameless poet as the auxiliar of virtue. Whatever talent enables a writer to possess an empire over the heart, and to lead the passions at his command, puts it in his power to be of no small service to mankind. It is no new remark that the abuse of any good thing is no argument against its legitimate use. Intoxication affords no just reason against the use of wine, nor prodigality against the possession of wealth. In the instance in dispute I should rather infer that a talent capable of diffusing so much mischief, was susceptible of no small

 benefit.

benefit. That it has been so often abused by its misapplication, is one of the highest instances of the ingratitude of man for one of highest gifts of God."

"I cannot think," said I, "that the Almighty conferred such a faculty with a wish to have it extinguished. Works of imagination have in many countries been a chief instrument of civilization. Poetry has not only preceded science in the history of human progress, but it has in many countries preceded the knowlege of the mechanical arts; and I have somewhere read, that in Scotland they would write elegant Latin verse before they could make a wheel-barrow. For my own part, in my late visit to London I thought the decline of poetry no favourable symptom."

"I rejoice to hear it *is* declining," said Tyrrel. "I hope that what is decaying, may in time be extinguished."

"Mr. Tyrrel would have been delighted with what I was displeased," replied

plied I. "I met with philosophers, who were like Plato in nothing but in his abhorrence of the Muses; with politicians, who resembled Burleigh only in his enmity to Spenser; and with warriors, who however they might emulate Alexander in his conquests, would never have imitated him in sparing the 'house of Pindarus."

"The *art* of poetry," said Mr. Stanley, "is to touch the passions, and its *duty* to lead them on the side of virtue. To raise and to purify the amusements of mankind; to multiply and to exalt pleasures, which being purely intellectual may help to exclude such as are gross, in beings so addicted to sensuality, is surely not only to give pleasure, but to render service. It is allowable to seize every avenue to the heart of a being so prone to evil, to rescue him by every fair means not only from the degradation of vice, but from the dominion of idleness. I do not now speak of gentlemen of the sacred function, to which Mr. Edward Tyrrel aspires, but of those

having no profession, have no stated employment; and who having more leisure, will be in danger of exceeding the due bounds in the article of amusement. Let us then endeavour to allure our youth of fashion from the low pleasures of the dissolute; to snatch them, not only from the destruction of the gaming-table, but from the excesses of the dining table, by inviting them to any elegant delight that is safe, and especially by enlarging the range of pure mental pleasure.

"In order to this, let us do all we can to cultivate their taste, and innocently indulge their fancy. Let us contend with impure writers, those deadliest enemies to the youthful mind, by opposing to them in the chaster authors, images more attractive, wit more acute, learning more various; in all which excellencies your first-rate poets certainly excel their vicious competitors."

"Would you, Mr. Tyrrel," said Sir John, "throw into the enemy's camp all

all the light arms which often successfully annoy where the heavy artillery cannot reach?"

"Let us," replied Mr. Stanley, "rescue from the hands of the profane and the impure, the monopoly of wit which they affect to possess, and which they would possess, if no good men had written works of elegant literature, and if all good men totally despised them."

"For my own part," said Mr. Tyrrel, "I believe that a good man in my sense of the word, will neither write works of imagination, nor read them."

"At your age and mine, and better employed as we certainly may be," said Mr. Stanley, "we want not such resources. I myself, though I strongly retain the relish, have little leisure for the indulgence, which yet I would allow, though with great discrimination, to the young and the unoccupied. What is to whet the genius of the champions of virtue, so as to enable them successfully to combat the leaders of

 vice

vice and infidelity, if we refuse to let them be occasionally sharpened and polished by such studies? That model of brilliant composition, Bishop Jeremy Taylor, was of this opinion, when he said 'by whatever instrument piety is advantaged, use that, though thou grindest thy spears and arrows at the forges of the Philistines.'

"I know," continued Mr. Stanley, "that a Christian need not borrow weapons of attack or defence from the classic armoury: but to drop all metaphor, if he be called upon to defend truth and virtue against men whose minds are adorned with all that is elegant, strengthened with all that is powerful, and enriched with all that is persuasive, from the writers in question—Is he likely to engage with due advantage if his own mind be destitute of the embellishments with which theirs abound? While wit and imagination are *their* favourite instruments, shall we consider the aid of either as useless, much less as sinful in their opponents?"

"While

While young men *will* be amused," said Sir John, "it is surely of importance that they should be *safely* amused. We should not therefore wish to obliterate in authors such faculties as wit and fancy, nor to extinguish a taste for them in readers."

"Shew me any one instance of good that ever was effected by any one poet," said Mr. Tyrrel, "and I will give up the point; while on the other hand, a thousand instances of mischief might doubtless be produced."

"The latter part of your assertion, Sir," said I, "I fear is too true; but to what evil has elevation of fancy led Milton, or Milton his readers? In what labyrinths of guilt did it involve Spenser or Cowley? Has Thomson, or has Young added to the crimes, or the calamities of mankind? Into what immoralities did it plunge Gay or Goldsmith? Has it tainted the purity of Beattie in his Minstrel, or that of the living minstrel of the LAY? What reader has Mason corrupted, or what reader has Cowper

Cowper not benefited? Milton was an enthusiast both in religion and politics. Many enthusiasts with whom he was connected, doubtless condemned the exercise of his imagination in his immoral poem as a crime; but his genius was too mighty to be restrained by opposition, and his imagination too vast and powerful to be kept down by a party. Had he confined himself to his prose writings, weighty and elaborate as some of them are, how little service would he have done the world, and how little would he now be read or quoted! In his life-time politics might blind his enemies, and fanaticism his friends. But now, who, comparatively, reads the Iconoclastes? who does not read Comus?"

"What then," said Mr. Tyrrel, "you would have our young men spend their time in reading idle verses, and our girls, I suppose, in reading loose romances?"

"It is to preserve both from evils which I deprecate," said Mr. Stanley, "that I would consign the most engaging subjects to

to the best hands, and raise the taste of our youth, by allowing a little of their leisure, and of their leisure only, to such amusements; and that chiefly with a view to disengage them from worse pursuits. It is not romance, but indolence; it is not poetry, but sensuality, which are the prevailing evils of the day—evils far more fatal in themselves, far more durable in their effects, than the perusal of works of wit and genius. Imagination will cool of itself. The effervescence of fancy will soon subside; but absorbing dissipations, but paralyzing idleness, but degrading self-love,

> Grows with their growth, and strengthens with their strength."

"A judicious reformer," said Sir John, "will accommodate his remedy to an existing and not an imaginary evil. When the old romances, the grand Cyrus's, the Clelias, the Cassandras, the Pharamonds, and the Amadis's, had turned all the young heads in Europe; or when the fury of knight errantry demanded the powerful

rein

rein of Cervantes to check it—it was a duty to attempt to lower the public delirium. When in our own age and country, Sterne wrote his corrupt, but too popular lesser work, he became the mischievous founder of the school of sentiment. A hundred writers communicated, a hundred thousand readers caught the infection. Sentimentality was the disease which then required to be expelled. The reign of Sterne is past. Sensibility is discarded, and with it the softness which it must be confessed belonged to it. Romance is vanished, and with it the heroic, though somewhat unnatural elevation which accompanied it. We have little to regret in the loss of either: nor have we much cause to rejoice in what we have gained by the exchange. A pervading and substantial selfishness, the striking characteristic of our day, is no great improvement on the wildness of the old romance, or the vapid puling of the sentimental school."

"Surely,"

"Surely," said I, (L'Almanac des Gourmands at that instant darting across my mind,) "it is as honourable for a gentleman to excel in critical as in culinary skill. It is as noble to cultivate the intellectual taste as that of the palate. It is at least as creditable to discuss the comparative merits of Sophocles and Shakespeare, as the rival ingredients of a soup or a sauce. I will even venture to affirm that it is as dignified an amusement to run a tilt in favour of Virgil or Tasso against their assailants, as to run a barouche against a score of rival barouches; and though I own that in Gulliver's land of the Houyhnhnms, the keeping up the breed of horses might have been the nobler patriotism, yet in Great Britain it is hitherto at least become no contemptible exertion of skill and industry to keep up the breed of gentlemen."

CHAP. XXX.

I STROLLED out alone, intending to call at the rectory, but was prevented by meeting the worthy Dr. Barlow, who was coming to the Grove. I could not lose so fair an opportunity of introducing a subject that was seldom absent from my thoughts. I found it was a subject on which I had no new discoveries to impart. He told me he had seen and rejoiced in the election my heart had made. I was surprised at his penetration. He smiled and said, "he took no great credit for his sagacity, in perceiving what was obvious to spectators far more indifferent than himself; that I resembled those animals who, by hiding their heads in the earth, fancied nobody could see them."

I asked him a thousand questions about Lucilla, whose fine mind I knew he

he had in some measure contributed to form. I enquired, with an eagerness which he called jealousy, who were her admirers? "As many men as have seen her," replied he. "I know no man who has so many rivals as yourself. To relieve your apprehensions, however, I will tell you, that though there have been several competitors for her favour, not one has been accepted. There has, indeed, this summer been a very formidable candidate, young Lord Staunton, who has a large estate in the country, and whom she met on a visit." At these words I felt my fears revive. A young and handsome peer seemed so redoubtable a rival, that for a moment I only remembered she was a woman, and forgot that she was Lucilla.

"You may set your heart at rest," said Dr. Barlow, who saw my emotion. "She heard he had seduced the innocent daughter of one of his tenants, under the most specious pretence of honourable love. This, together with the

looseness of his religious principles, led her to give his lordship a positive refusal, though he is neither destitute of talents nor personal accomplishments."

How ashamed was I of my jealousy! How I felt my admiration increase! Yet I thought it was too great before to admit of augmentation. "Another proposal," said Dr. Barlow, "was made to her father by a man every way unexceptionable. But she desired him to be informed that it was her earnest request, that he would proceed no farther, but spare her the pain of refusing a gentleman for whose character she entertained a sincere respect; but being persuaded she could never be able to feel more than respect, she positively declined receiving his addresses, assuring him at the same time, she sincerely desired to retain as a friend, him whom she felt herself obliged to refuse as a husband. 'She is as far from the vanity of seeking to make conquests, as from the ungenerous insolence of using ill, those whom

whom her merit has captivated, and whom her judgment cannot accept."

After admiring in the warmest terms the purity and generosity of her heart, I pressed Dr. Barlow still farther as to the interior of her mind. I questioned him as to her early habits, and particularly as to her religious attainments, telling him that nothing was indifferent to me which related to Lucilla.

"Miss Stanley," replied he, "is governed by a simple, practical end, in all her religious pursuits. She reads her bible, not from habit that she may acquit herself of a customary form; not to exercise her ingenuity by allegorizing literal passages, or spiritualizing plain ones, but that she may improve in knowlege, and grow in grace. She accustoms herself to meditation, in order to get her mind more deeply imbued with a sense of eternal things. She practices self-examination, that she may learn to watch against the first rising of bad dispositions, and to detect

tect every latent evil in her heart. She lives in the regular habit of prayer; not only that she may implore pardon for sin, but that she may obtain strength against it. She told me one day when she was ill, that if she did not constantly examine the actual state of her mind, she should pray at random, without any certainty what particular sins she should pray against, or what were her particular wants. She has read much scripture and little controversy. There are some doctrines that she does not pretend to define, which she yet practically adopts. She cannot perhaps give you a disquisition on the mysteries of the Holy Spirit, but she can and does fervently implore his guidance and instruction; she believes in his efficacy, and depends on his support. She is sensible that those truths which from their deep importance are most obvious, have more of the vitality of religion, and influence practice more, than those abstruse points, which unhappily split the

the religious world into so many parties.

"If I were to name what are her predominant virtues, I should say sincerity and humility. Conscious of her own imperfections, she never justifies her faults and seldom extenuates them. She receives reproof with meekness, and advice with gratitude. Her own conscience is always so ready to condemn her, that she never wonders nor takes offence at the censures of others.

"That softness of manner which you admire in her is not the varnish of good breeding, nor is it merely the effect of good temper, though in both she excels, but it is the result of humility. She appears humble, not because a mild exterior is graceful, but because she has an inward conviction of unworthiness which prevents an assuming manner. Yet her humility has no cant, she never disburthens her conscience by a few disparaging phrases, nor lays a trap for praise by indiscriminately

discriminately condemning herself. Her humility never impairs her cheerfulness; for the sense of her wants directs her to seek, and her faith enables her to find the sure foundation of a better hope than any which can be derived from a delusive confidence in her own goodness.

"One day," continued Dr. Barlow, "when I blamed her gently for her backwardness in expressing her opinion on some serious point, she said, 'I always feel diffident in speaking on these subjects, not only lest I should be *thought* to assume, but lest I really *should* assume a degree of piety, which may not belong to me. My great advantages make me jealous of myself. My dear father has so carefully instructed me, and I live so much in the habit of hearing his pious sentiments, that I am often afraid of appearing better than I am, and of pretending to feel in my heart, what perhaps I only approve in my judgment. When my beloved mother was ill,' continued she, 'I often caught myself saying mechanically, God's will be

be done! when, I blush to own, how little I felt in my heart of that resignation of which my lips were so lavish.'"

I hung with inexpressible delight on every word Doctor Barlow uttered, and expressed my fears, that such a prize was too much above my deserts, to allow me to encourage very sanguine hopes. "You have my cordial wishes for your success," said he, "though I shall lament the day, when you snatch so fair a flower from our fields, to transplant it into your northern gardens."

We had now reached the Park gate, where Sir John and Lady Belfield joined us. As it was very hot, Dr. Barlow proposed to conduct us a nearer way. He carried us through a small nursery of fruit trees, which I had not before observed, though it was adjoining the ladies' flower-garden, from which it was separated and concealed by a row of tall trees. I expressed my surprize that the delicate Lucilla would allow so coarse an inclosure to be so near her ornamented ground. "You see she does all she can to shut it out," replied he. "I will

tell you how it happens, for I cannot vindicate the taste of my fair friend, without exposing a better quality in her. But if I betray her, you must not betray me.

"It is a rule when any servant who has lived seven years at the Grove marries, provided they have conducted themselves well and make a prudent choice, for Mr. Stanley to give them a piece of ground on the waste to build a cottage: he also allows them to take stones from his quarry, and lime from his kiln; to this he adds a bit of ground for a garden. Mrs. Stanley presents some kitchen furniture, and gives a wedding dinner; and the Rector refuses his fee for performing the ceremony."

"Caroline," said Sir John, "this is not the first time since we have been at the Grove, that I have been struck with observing how many benefits naturally result to the poor, from the rich living on their own estates. Their dependants have a thousand petty local advantages, which cost almost nothing to the giver, which are yet

yet valuable to the receiver, and of which the absent never think."

"You have heard," said Doctor Barlow, "that Miss Stanley, from her childhood, has been passionately fond of cultivating a garden. When she was hardly fourteen, she began to reflect that the delight she took in this employment was attended neither with pleasure nor profit to any one but herself, and she became jealous of a gratification which was so entirely selfish. She begged this piece of waste ground of her father, and stocked it with a number of fine young fruit trees of the common sort, apples, pears, plumbs, and the smaller fruits. When there is a wedding among the older servants, or when any good girl out of her school marries, she presents their little empty garden with a dozen young apple trees, and a few trees of the other sorts, never forgetting to embellish their little court with roses and honey-suckles. These last she transplants from the shrubbery, not to fill up the *village garden*, as it is called, with any thing that is of no positive use. She

employs a poor lame man in the village a day in the week to look after this nursery, and by cuttings and grafts a good stock is raised on a small space. It is done at her own expence, Mr. Stanley making this a condition when he gave her the ground; "otherwise," said he, "trifling as it is, it would be my charity and not hers, and she would get thanked for a kindness which would cost her nothing." The warm-hearted little Phœbe co-operates in this, and all her sister's labours of love.

"Some such union of charity with every personal indulgence, she generally imposes on herself; and from this association she has acquired another virtue, for she tells me smiling, she is sometimes obliged to content herself with practising frugality instead of charity. When she finds she cannot afford both her own gratification, and the charitable act which she wanted to associate with it, and is therefore compelled to give up the charity, she compels herself to give up the indulgence also. By this self-denial she

she gets a little money in hand, for the next demand, and thus is enabled to afford both next time."

As he finished speaking, we spied the lame gardener pruning and clearing the trees. "Well, James," said the Doctor, "how does your nursery thrive?" "Why, Sir," said the poor man, "we are rather thin of stout trees at present. You know we had three weddings at Christmas, which took thirty-six of my best apple-trees at a blow, besides half a dozen tall pear trees, and as many plumbs. But we shall soon fetch it up, for Miss Lucilla makes me plant two for every one that is removed, so that we are always provided for a wedding, come when it will."

I now recollected that I had been pleased with observing so many young orchards and flourishing cottage-gardens in the village; little did I suspect the fair hand which could thus in a very few years diffuse an air of smiling comfort around these humble habitations, and embellish poverty itself. She makes, they told me, her pe-

 riodical

riodical visits of inspection to see that neatness and order do not degenerate.

Not to appear too eager, I asked the poor man some questions about his health, which seemed infirm. "I am but weak, Sir," said he "for matter of that, but I should have been dead long ago but for the squire's family. He gives me the run of his kitchen, and Miss Lucilla allows me half a crown a week, for one day's work, and any odd hour I can spare; but she don't let me earn it, for she is always watching for fear it should be too hot or too cold, or too wet for me; and she brings me my dose of bark herself into this tool-house, that she may be sure I take it; for she says servants and poor people like to have medicines provided for them, but don't care to take them. Then she watches that I don't throw my coat on the wet grass, which, she says, gives labouring men so much rheumatism; and she made me this nice flannel waistcoat, Sir, with her own hands. At Christmas they gave me a new suit from top to toe so that I want for nothing but a more thank-

thankful heart, for I never can be grateful enough to God and my benefactors."

I asked some further questions only to have the pleasure of hearing him talk longer about Lucilla. "But Sir," said he, interrupting me, "I heard bad news, very bad news. Pray, your honour, forgive me." "What do you mean, James?" said I, seeing his eyes fill. "Why, Sir, all the servants at the Grove will have it that you are come to carry off Miss Lucilla. God bless her whenever she goes. Your Mr. Edwards, Sir, says you are one of the best of gentlemen, but indeed, indeed, I don't know who can deserve her. She will carry a blessing wherever she goes." The honest fellow put up the sleeve of his coat to brush away his tears, nor was I ashamed of those with which his honest affection filled my own eyes. While we were talking, a poor little girl, who I knew by her neat uniform belonged to Miss Stanley's school, passed us with a little basket in her hand. James called to her, and said, "make haste, Rachel, you are after your time."

"What this is market-day, James, is it," said Dr. Barlow, "and Rachel is come for her nosegays?" "Yes Sir," said James; "I forgot to tell their honours, that every Saturday as soon as the school is over, the younger Misses give Rachel leave to come and fetch some flowers out of their garden, which she carries to the town to sell; she commonly gets a shilling, half of which they make her lay out to bring home a little tea, for her poor sick mother, and the other half she lays up to buy shoes and stockings for herself and her crippled sister. Every little is a help where there is nothing, Sir."

Sir John said nothing, but looked at Lady Belfield, whose eyes glistened while she softly said, "O how little do the rich ever think what the aggregate even of their own squandered shillings would do in the way of charity, were they systematically applied to it!"

James now unlocked a little private door which opened into the pleasure ground. There at a distance, sitting in a circle on the

the new-mown grass, under a tree, we beheld all the little Stanleys, with a basket of flowers between them, out of which they were earnestly employed in sorting and tying up nosegays. We stood some time admiring their little busy faces and active fingers without their perceiving us, and got up to them just as they were putting their prettily formed bouquets into Rachel's basket, with which she marched off, with many charges from the children to waste no time by the way, and to be sure to leave the nosegay that had the myrtle in it at Mrs. Williams's.

"How many nosegays have you given to Rachel to-day, Louisa?" said Dr. Barlow to the eldest of the four. "Only three a-piece, Sir," replied she. "We think it a bad day when we can't make up our dozen. They are all our own; we seldom touch mamma's flowers, and we never suffer James to take ours, because Phœbe says it might be tempting him." Little Jane lamented that Lucilla had given them nothing to-day, except two or three sprigs of her best flower-

ing myrtle, which, added she, we make Rachel give into the bargain to a poor sick lady, who loves flowers and used to have good ones of her own, but who has now no money to spare, and could not afford to give more than the common price for a nosegay for her sick room! So we always slip a nice flower or two out of the green-house into her little bunch, and say nothing. When we walk that way we often leave her some flowers ourselves, and would do it oftener if it did not hurt poor Rachel's trade."

As we walked away from the sweet prattlers, Dr. Barlow said, "These little creatures already emulate their sisters in associating some petty kindness with their own pleasures. The act is trifling, but the habit is good; as is every habit which helps to take us out of self; which teaches us to transfer our attention from our own gratification to the wants or the pleasures of another."

"I confess," said Lady Belfield, as we entered the house, "that it never occurred

to me that it was any part of charity to train my children to the habit of sacrificing their time or their pleasure for the benefit of others, though, to do them justice, they are very feeling and very liberal with their money."

"My dear Caroline," said Sir John, "it is our money, not theirs. It is, I fear, a cheap liberality, and abridges not themselves of one enjoyment. They well know we are so pleased to see them charitable, that we shall instantly repay them with interest whatever they give away; so that we have hitherto afforded them no opportunity to shew their actual dispositions. Nay, I begin to fear they may become charitable through covetousness, if they find out that the more they give the more they shall get. We must correct this artificial liberality as soon as we go home."

CHAP. XXXI.

A FEW days after, Sir John Belfield and I agreed to take a ride to Mr. Carlton's, where we breakfasted. Nothing could be more rational than the whole turn of his mind, nor more agreeable and unreserved than his conversation. His behaviour to his amiable wife was affectionately attentive, and Sir John who is a most critical observer, remarked that it was quite natural and unaffected. It appeared to be the result of esteem inspired by her merit, and quickened by a sense of his own former unworthiness, which made him feel as if he could never do enough to efface the memory of past unkindness. He manifested evident symptoms of a mind earnestly intent on the discovery and pursuit of moral and religious truth; and from the natural ardour of his character, and the sincerity

rity of his remorse, his attainments seemed likely to be rapid and considerable.

The sweet benignity of Mrs. Carlton's countenance was lighted up at our entrance with a smile of satisfaction. We had been informed with what pleasure she observed every accession of right-minded acquaintance which her husband made. Though her natural modesty prevented her from introducing any subject herself, yet when any thing useful was brought forward by others, she promoted it by a look compounded of pleasure and intelligence.

After a variety of topics had been dispatched, the conversation fell on the prejudices which were commonly entertained by men of the world against religion. "For my own part," said Mr. Carlton, "I must confess that no man had ever more and stronger prejudices to combat than myself. I mean not my own exculpation, when I add, that the imprudence, the want of judgment, and above all the incongruous mixtures and inconsistencies in many characters who are reckoned religious, are ill calculated to do away

away the unfavourable opinions of men of an opposite way of thinking. As I presume that you, gentlemen, are not ignorant of the errors of my early life—error indeed is an appellation far too mild—I shall not scruple to own to you the source of those prejudices which retarded my progress, even after I became ashamed of my deviations from virtue. I had felt the turpitude of my bad habits long before I had courage to renounce them; and I renounced them long before I had courage to avow my abhorrence of them."

Sir John and I expressed ourselves extremely obliged by the candour of his declaration, and assured him that his further communications would not only gratify but benefit us.

"Educated as I had been," said Mr. Carlton, "in an almost entire ignorance of religion, mine was rather an habitual indifference than a systematic unbelief. My thoughtless course of life, though it led me to hope that Christianity might not be true, yet had by no means been able to convince me that it was false. As I had not been taught to

search

search for truth at the fountain, for I was unacquainted with the Bible, I had no readier means for forming my judgment, than by observing, though with a careless and casual eye, what effect religion produced in those who professed to be influenced by it. My observations augmented my prejudices. What I saw of the professors increased my dislike of the profession. All the charges brought by their enemies, for I had been accustomed to weigh the validity of testimony, had not rivetted my dislike so much, as the difference between their own avowed principles and their obvious practice. Religious men should be the more cautious of giving occasion for reproach, as they know the world is always on the watch, and is more glad to have its prejudices confirmed than removed."

"I seized the moment of Mrs. Carlton's absence (who was just then called out of the room, but returned almost immediately) to observe, that what rooted my disgust was the eagerness with which the mother of my inestimable wife, who made a great parade of religion, pressed the marriage

of her only child with a man whose conduct she knew to be irregular, and of whose principles she entertained a just, that is, an unfavourable opinion. To see, I repeat, the religious mother of Mrs. Carlton obviously governed in her zeal for prompting our union by motives as worldly as those of my poor father, who pretended to no religion at all, would have extremely lowered any respect which I previously might have been induced to entertain for characters of that description. Nor was this disgust diminished by my acquaintance with Mr. Tyrrel. I had known him while a professed man of the world, and had at that time, I fear, disliked his violent temper, his narrow mind, and his coarse manners, more than his vices.

"I had heard of the power of religion to change the heart, and I ridiculed the wild chimera. My contempt for this notion was confirmed by the conduct of Mr. Tyrrel in his new character. I found it had produced little change in him, except furnishing him with a new subject of discussion. I saw that he had only laid down one set of opinions,

and

and taken up another, with no addition whatever to his virues, and with the addition to his vices of spiritual pride and self-confidence; for with hypocrisy I have no right to charge any man. I observed that Tyrrel and one or two of his new friends, rather courted attack than avoided it. They considered discretion as the infirmity of a worldly mind, and every attempt at kindness or conciliation as an abandonment of faith. They eagerly ascribed to their piety, the dislike which was often excited by their peculiarities. I found them apt to dignify the disapprobation which their singularity occasioned with the name of persecution. I have seen them take comfort in the belief that it was their religion which was disliked, when perhaps it was chiefly their oddities.

"At Tyrrel's I became acquainted with your friends Mr. and Mrs. Ranby. I leave you to judge whether their characters, that of the lady especially, were calculated to do away my prejudices. I had learnt from my favourite Roman poet a precept in composition, of never making a God appear,

except

except on occasions worthy of a God. I have since had reason to think this rule as justly theological as it is classical. So thought not the Ranbys.

"It will indeed readily be allowed by every reflecting mind, as God is to be viewed in all his works, so his 'never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and on earth.' But surely there is something very offensive in the indecent familiarity with which the name of God and Providence is brought in on every trivial occasion, as was the constant practice of Mr. and Mrs. Ranby. I was not even then so illogical a reasoner as to allow a general and deny a particular Providence. If the one were true, I inferred that the other could not be false. But I felt that the religion of these people was of a slight texture and a bad taste. I was disgusted with littleness in some instances, and with inconsistency in others. Still their absurdity gave me no right to suspect their sincerity.

"Whenever Mrs. Ranby had a petty inclination to gratify, she had always recourse

to what she called the *leadings of Providence*. In matters of no more moment than whether she should drink tea with one neighbour instead of another, she was *impelled*, or *directed* or *over-ruled*. I observed that she always took care to interpret these *leadings* to her own taste, and under their sanction, she always did what her fancy led her to do. She professed to follow this guidance on such minute occasions, that I had almost said, her piety seemed a little impious. To the actual dispensations of Providence, especially when they came in a trying or adverse shape, I did not observe more submission, than I had seen in persons who could not be suspected of religion. I must own to you also, that as I am rather fastidious, I began to fancy that vulgar language, quaint phrases, and false grammar, were necessarily connected with religion. The sacrifice of taste and elegance, seemed indispensable, and I was inclined to fear that if *they* were right, it would be impossible to get to heaven with good English."

"Though I grant there is some truth in

your

your remarks, Sir," said I, "you must allow that when men are determined at all events to hunt down religious characters, they are never at a loss to find plausible objections to justify their dislike; and while they conceal, even from themselves, the real motive of their aversion, the vigilance with which they pry into the characters of men who are reckoned pious, is exercised with the secret hope of finding faults enough to confirm their prejudices."

"As a general truth, you are perfectly right," said Mr. Carlton; "but at the period to which I allude, I had now got to that stage of my progress, as to be rather searching for instances to invite than to repel me in my inquiry."

"You will grant however," said I, "that it is a common effect of prejudice to transfer the faults of a religious man to religion itself. Such a man happens to have an uncouth manner, an awkward gesture, an unmodulated voice; his allusions may be coarse, his phraseology quaint, his language slovenly.

venly. The solid virtues which may lie disguised under these incumbrances go for nothing. The man is absurd, and therefore Christianity is ridiculous. Its truth however, though it may be eclipsed, cannot be extinguished. Like its divine author, it is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

"There was another repulsive circumstance," replied Mr. Carlton, "the scanty charities both of Tyrrel and his new friends, so inferior to the liberality of my father and of Mr. Flam, who never professed to be governed by any higher movite than mere feeling, strengthened my dislike. The calculations of mere reason taught me that the religious man who does not greatly exceed the man of the world in his liberalities, falls short of him; because the worldly man who gives liberally, acts above his principle, while the Christian who does no more, falls short of his. And though I by no means insist that liberality is a certain indication of piety, yet I will venture to assert that the want of the one is no

doubt-

doubtful symptom of the absence of the other.

"I next resolved to watch carefully the conduct of another description of Christians, who come under the class of the formal and the decent. They were considered as more creditable, but I did not perceive them to be more exemplary. They were more absorbed in the world, and more governed by its opinion. I found them clamorous in defence of the church in words, but neither adorning it by their lives, or embracing its doctrines in their hearts. Rigid in the observance of some of its external rites but little influenced by its liberal principles, and charitable spirit. They venerated the establishment merely as a political institution, but of her outward forms they conceived, as comprehending the whole of her excellence. Of her spiritual beauty and superiority, they seemed to have no conception. I observed in them less warmth of affection, for those with whom they agreed in external profession, than of rancour for those who differed from them, though

though but a single shade, and in points of no importance. They were cordial haters, and frigid lovers. Had they lived in the early ages, when the church was split into parties by paltry disputes, they would have thought the controversy about the time of keeping Easter, of more consequence than the event itself, which that festival celebrates."

"My dear Sir," said I, as soon as he had done speaking, "you have accounted very naturally for your prejudices. Your chief error seems to have consisted in the selection of the persons you adopted as standards. They all differed as much from the right as they differed from each other: and the truth is, their vehement desire, to differ from each other, was a chief cause why they departed so much from the right. But your instances were so unhappily chosen, that they prove nothing against Christianity. The two opposite descriptions, of persons who deterred you from religion, and who passed muster in their respective corps, under the generic terms of religious, would, I believe, be

be scarcely acknowleged as such by the soberly and soundly pious."

"My own subsequent experience," resumed Mr. Carlton, "has confirmed the justness of your remark. When I began, through the gradual change wrought in my views and actions, by the silent, but powerful preaching of Mrs. Carlton's example, to have less interest in believing that Christianity was false, I then applied myself to search for reasons to believe that it was true. But plain, abstract reasoning, though it might catch hold on beings who are all pure intellect, and though it might have given a right bias even to *my* opinions, would probably never have determined my conduct unless I saw it clothed, as it were, with a body. I wanted examples which should influence me to act, as well as proofs which should incline me to believe; something which would teach me what to do, as well as what to think. I wanted exemplifications as well as precepts I doubted of all merely speculative truth. I wanted, from beholding the effect, to refer back to the principle.

I wanted

I wanted arguments more palpable and less theoretic. Surely, said I to myself, if religion be a real principle, it must be an operative one, and I would rationally infer that Christianity were true, if the tone of Christian practice were high.

"I began to look clandestinely into Henrietta's Bible. There I indeed found that the spirit of religion was invested with just such a body as I had wished to see; that it exhibited actions as well as sentiments, characters as well as doctrines; the life pourtrayed evidently governed by the principle inculcated; the conduct and the doctrine in just correspondence. But if the Bible be true, thought I, may we not reasonably expect, that the principles which once produced the exalted practice which that Bible records, will produce similar effects now?

"I put, rashly perhaps, the truth of Christianity on this issue, and sought society of a higher stamp. Fortunately the increasing external decorum of my conduct, began to make my reception less difficult among good men than it had been. Hitherto,

to, and that for the sake of my wife, my visits had rather been endured than encouraged; nor was I myself forward to seek the society which shunned me. Even of those superior characters, with whom I did occasionally associate, I had not come near enough to form an exact estimate.

"DISINTERESTEDNESS and CONSISTENCY had become with me a sort of touch-stone by which to try the characters I was investigating. My experiment was favourable. I had for some time observed my wife's conduct, with a mixture of admiration as to the act, and incredulity as to the motive. I had seen her foregoing her own indulgences, that she might augment those of a husband whom she had so little reason to love. Here were the two qualities I required, with a renunciation of self without parade or profession. Still this was a solitary instance. When on a nearer survey, I beheld Dr. Barlow exhibiting by his exemplary conduct during the week, the best commentary on his Sunday's sermon: when I saw him refuse a living of

nearly

nearly twice the value of that he possessed, because the change would diminish his usefulness, I was *staggered.*

"When I saw Mr. and Mrs. Stanley spending their time and fortune as entirely in acts of beneficence, as if they had built their eternal hope on charity alone, and yet utterly renouncing any such confidence, and trusting entirely to another foundation;—when I saw Lucilla, a girl of eighteen, refuse a young nobleman of a clear estate, and neither disagreeable in his person or manner, on the single avowed ground of his loose principle; when the noble rejection of the daughter was supported by the parents, whose principles no arguments drawn from rank or fortune could subvert or shake—I was *convinced.*

"These, and some other instances of the same nature were exactly the test I had been seeking. Here was *disinterestedness* upon full proof. Here was *consistency* between practice and profession. By such examples, and by cordially adopting those

principles which produced them, together with a daily increasing sense of my past enormities, I hope to become in time less unworthy of the wife to whom I owe my peace on earth, and my hope in heaven."

The tears which had been collecting in Mrs. Carlton's eyes for some time, now silently stole down her cheeks. Sir John and myself were deeply affected with the frank and honest narrative to which we had been listening. It raised in us an esteem and affection for the narrator, which has since been continually augmenting. I do not think the worse of his state for the difficulties which impeded it, nor that his advancement will be less sure, because it has been gradual. His fear of delusion has been a salutary guard. The apparent slowness of his progress has arisen from his dread of self-deception, and the diligence of his search is an indication of his sincerity.

"But did you not find," said I, "that the piety of these more correct Christians drew upon them nearly as much censure and

and suspicion as the indiscretion of the enthusiasts? And that the formal class who were nearly as far removed from effective piety as from wild fanaticism, ran away with all the credit of religion?"

"With those," replied Mr. Carlton, "who are on the watch to discredit Christianity, no consistency can stand their determined opposition; but the fair and candid enquirer will not reject the truth, when it forces itself on the mind with a clear and convincing evidence."

Though I had been joining in the general subject, yet my thoughts had wandered from it to Lucilla, ever since her noble rejection of Lord Staunton had been named by Mr. Carlton, as one of the causes which had strengthened his unsteady faith. And while he and Sir John were talking over their youthful connexions, I resumed with Mrs. Carlton, who sat next me, the interesting topic.

"Lord Staunton," said she, "is a relation, and not a very distant one, of ours. He used to take more delight in Mr. Carl-

ton's society when it was less improving, than he does now, that it is become really valuable; yet he often visits us. Miss Stanley now and then indulges me with her company, for a day or two. In these visits Lord Staunton happened to meet her two or three times. He was enchanted with her person and manners, and exerted every art and faculty of pleasing, which it must be owned he possesses. Though we would both have rejoiced in alliance with the excellent family at the Grove, through this sweet girl, I thought it my duty not to conceal from her the irregularity of my cousin's conduct in one particular instance, as well as the general looseness of his religious principles. The caution was the more necessary, as he had so much prudence and good breeding, as to behave with general propriety when under our roof; and he allowed me to speak to him more freely than any other person. When I talked seriously he sometimes laughed, always opposed, but was never angry.

"One day he arrived quite unexpectedly

edly when Miss Stanley was with me. He found us in my dressing-room reading together a *Dissertation on the power of religion to change the heart.* Dreading some levity, I strove to hide the book, but he took it out of my hand, and glancing his eye on the title, he said laughing, "This is a foolish subject enough; a *good heart* does not want changing, and with a *bad* one none of *us three* have any thing to do." Lucilla spoke not a syllable. All the light things he uttered, and which he meant for wit, so far from raising a smile, increased her gravity. She listened, but with some uneasiness, to a desultory conversation between us, in which I attempted to assert the power of the Almighty to rectify the mind, and alter the character. Lord Staunton treated my assertion as a wild chimera, and said, "He was sure I had more understanding than to adopt such a methodistical notion; professing at the same time a vague admiration of virtue and goodness, which he said, bowing to Miss Stanley, were *natural* where they existed at all; that a good

heart did not want mending, and a bad one could not be mended, with other similar expressions, all implying contempt of my position, and exclusive compliment to her.

"After dinner, Lucilla stole away from a conversation which was not very interesting to her, and carried her book to the summer-house, knowing that Lord Staunton liked to sit long at table. But his lordship missing her for whom the visit was meant, soon broke up the party, and hearing which way she took, pursued her to the summer-house. After a profusion of compliments, expressive of his high admiration, he declared his passion in very strong and explicit terms, and requested her permission to make proposals to her father, to which he conceived she could have no possible objection.

"She thanked him with great politeness for his favourable opinion, but frankly told him, that though extremely sensible of the honour he intended her, thanks were all she had to offer in return; she earnestly desired the business might go no further, and that he would spare himself the trouble of an appli-

application to her father, who always kindly allowed her to decide for herself, in a concern of so much importance.

"Disappointed, shocked, and irritated at a rejection so wholly unexpected, he insisted on knowing the cause. Was it his person? Was it his fortune? Was it his understanding to which she objected? She honestly assured him it was neither. His rank and fortune were above her expectations. To his natural advantages there could be no reasonable objection. He still vehemently insisted on her assigning the true cause. She was then driven to the necessity of confessing, that she feared his principles were not those of a man, with whom she could venture to trust her own.

"He bore this reproof with more patience than she had expected. As she had made no exception to his person and understanding both of which he rated very highly, he could better bear with the charge brought against his principles, on which he did not set so great a value.

She had indeed wounded his pride, but not in the part where it was most vulnerable. 'If that be all,' said he gaily, 'the objection is at an end; your charming society will reform me, your influence will raise my principles, and your example will change my character.'

"What, my Lord," said she, her courage encreasing with her indignation, "this from *you?* From you, who declared only this morning that the work of changing the heart was too great for the Almighty himself? You do not now scruple to declare that it is in *my* power. That work which is too hard for omnipotence; your flattery would make me believe a weak girl can accomplish. No, my Lord, I will never add to the number of those rash women who have risked their eternal happiness on this vain hope. It would be too late to repent of my folly, after my presumption had incurred its just punishment."

"So saying, she left the summer-house with a polite dignity, which, as he afterwards told me increased his passion, while

it inflamed his pride almost to madness. Finding she refused to appear, he quitted the house, but not his design. His applications have since been repeated, but though he has met with the firmest repulse, both from the parents and the daughter, he cannot be prevailed upon to relinquish his hope. It is so far a misfortune to us, as Lucilla now never comes near us, except he is known not to be in the country. Had the objection been to his person or fortune, he says, as it would have been substantial, it might have been insuperable; but where the only ground of difference is mere matter of opinion, he is sure that time and perseverance will conquer such a chimerical objection."

I returned to the Grove, not only cured of every jealous feeling, but transported with such a decisive proof of the dignity and purity of Miss Stanley's mind.

CHAP. XXXII.

Miss Sparkes, a neighbouring lady, whom the reputation of being a wit and an Amazon, had kept single at the age of five and forty, though her person was not disagreeable, and her fortune was considerable, called in one morning while we were at breakfast. She is remarkable for her pretension to odd, and opposite qualities. She is something of a scholar, and a huntress, a politician, and a farrier: She outrides Mr. Flam, and outargues Mr. Tyrrel; excels in driving four in hand, and in canvassing at an election. She is always anxious about the party, but never about the candidate, in whom she requires no other merit but his being in the opposition, which she accepts as a pledge for all other merit. In her adoption of any talent, or her exercise of any quality, it is

always sufficient recommendation to her that it is not feminine.

From the window we saw her descend from her lofty phaeton, and when she came in,

The cap, the whip, the masculine attire,

the loud voice, the intrepid look, the independent air, the whole deportment indicated a disposition, rather to confer protection than to accept it.

She made an apology for her intrusion, by saying that her visit was rather to the stable than the breakfast-room. One of her horses was a little lame, and she wanted to consult Mr. Stanley's groom, who it seems was her oracle in that science, in which she herself is a professed adept.

During her short visit, she laboured so sedulously, not to diminish by her conversation the character she was so desirous to establish, that her efforts defeated the end they aimed to secure. She was witty with all her might, and her sarcastic turn, for wit it was not, made little amends for her want of simplicity. I perceived that she

she was fond of the bold, the marvellous and the incredible. She ventured to tell a story or two, so little within the verge of ordinary probability, that she risked her credit for veracity, without perhaps really violating truth. The credit acquired by such relations seldom pays the relater for the hazard run by the communication.

As we fell into conversation, I observed the peculiarities of her character. She never sees any difficulties in any question. Whatever topic is started, while the rest of the company are hesitating as to the propriety of their determination, she alone is never at a loss. Her answer always follows the proposition, without a moment's interval for examination herself, or for allowing any other person a chance of delivering an opinion.

Mr. Stanley, who always sets an example of strict punctuality to his family, had to-day come in to perform his family devotions somewhat later than usual. I could perceive that he had been a little moved.

His

His countenance wanted something of its placid serenity, though it seemed to be a seriousness untinctured with anger. He confessed while we were at breakfast, that he had been spending above an hour, in bringing one of his younger children to a sense of a fault she had committed. "She has not," said he, "told an absolute falsehood, but in what she said there was prevarication, there was pride, there was passion. Her perverseness has at length given way. Tears of resentment are changed into tears of contrition. But she is not to appear in the drawing-room to-day. She is to be deprived of the honour of carrying food to the poor in the evening. Nor is she to furnish her contingent of nosegays to Rachel's basket. This mode of punishment we prefer to that of curtailing any personal indulgences; the importance we should assign to the privation, would be setting too much value on the enjoyment."

"You should be careful, Mr. Stanley," said Miss Sparkes, "not to break the child's

child's spirit. Too tight a rein will check her generous ardour, and curb her genius. I would not subdue the independence of her mind, and make a tame, dull animal, of a creature, whose very faults give indications of a soaring nature." Even Lady Belfield, to whose soft and tender heart, the very sound of punishment, or even privation, carried a sort of terror, asked Mr. Stanley, "if he did not think that he had taken up a trifling offence too seriously, and punished it too severely?"

"The thing is a trifle in itself," replied he, "but infant prevarication unnoticed, and unchecked, is the prolific seed of subterfuge, of expediency, of deceit, of falsehood, of hypocrisy."

"But the dear little creature," said Lady Belfield, "is not addicted to equivocation. I have always admired her correctness in her pleasant prattle."

"It is for that very reason," replied Mr. Stanley, "that I am so careful to check the first indication of the contrary tendency. As the fault is a solitary one, I trust

the

the punishment will be so too. For which reason I have marked it in a way, to which her memory will easily recur.—Mr. Brandon, an amiable friend of mine, but of an indolent temper, through a negligence in watching over an early propensity to deceit, suffered his only son to run on from one stage of falshood to another, till he settled down in a most consummate hypocrite. His plausible manners enabled him to keep his more turbulent vices out of sight. Impatient when a youth of that contradiction to which he had never been accustomed when a boy, he became notoriously profligate. His dissimulation was at length too thin to conceal from his mistaken father his more palpable vices. His artifices finally involved him in a duel, and his premature death broke the heart of my poor friend.

"This sad example led me in my own family to watch this evil in the bud. Divines often say, that unbelief lies at the root of all sin. This seems strikingly true in our conniving at the faults of our children.

dren. If we really believed the denunciations of Scripture, could we for the sake of a momentary gratification, not so much to our child, as to ourselves, (which is the case in all blameable indulgence,) overlook that fault which may be the germ of unspeakable miseries? In my view of things, deceit is no slight offence. I feel myself answerable in no small degree for the eternal happiness of these beloved creatures whom Providence has especially committed to my trust."

"But it is such a severe trial," said Lady Belfield, "to a fond parent to inflict voluntary pain!"

"Shall we feel for their pain and not for their danger?" replied Mr. Stanley. "I wonder how parents who love their children as I love mine, can put in competition a temporary indulgence, which may foster one evil temper, or fasten one bad habit, with the eternal welfare of that child's soul.—A soul of such inconceivable worth, whether we consider its nature, its duration, or the price which was paid

paid for its redemption! What parent, I say, can by his own rash negligence, or false indulgence, risk the happiness of such a soul, not for a few days or years, but for a period compared with which the whole duration of time is but a point? A soul of such infinite faculties, which has a capacity for improving in holiness and happiness, through all the countless ages of eternity?"

Observing Sir John listen with some emotion, Mr. Stanley went on; "What remorse, my dear friend, can equal the pangs of him, who has reason to believe that his child has not only lost this eternity of glory, but incurred an eternity of misery, through the carelessness of that parent who assigned his very fondness, as a reason for his neglect? Think of the state of such a father, when he figures to himself the thousands and ten thousands of glorified spirits that stand before the throne, and his darling excluded!—excluded perhaps by his own ill-judging fondness.—Oh, my friends, disguise it as we may, and deceive

deceive ourselves as we will, want of faith is as much at the bottom of this sin as of all others. Notwithstanding an indefinite, indistinct notion which men call faith, they do not actually *believe* in this eternity; they believe it in a general way, but they do not believe in it practically, personally, influentially."

While Mr. Stanley was speaking with an energy which evinced how much his own heart was affected, Miss Sparkes, by the impatience of her looks, evidently manifested that she wished to interrupt him. Good breeding, however, kept her silent till he had done speaking: she then said, "that though she allowed that absolute falsehood and falsehood used for mischievous purposes, was really criminal, yet there was a danger on the other hand of laying too severe restrictions on freedom of speech. That there might be such a thing as tacit hypocrisy. That people might be guilty of as much deceit by suppressing their sentiments if just, as by expressing such as were not quite correct. That a repulsive treatment

was

was calculated to extinguish the fire of invention. She thought also that there were occasions where a harmless falsehood might not only be pardonable, but laudable. But then she allowed, that a falsehood, to be allowed must be inoffensive."

Mr. Stanley said, "that an inoffensive falsehood was a perfect anomaly. But allowing it possible, that an individual instance of deceit might be passed over, which however he never could allow, yet one successful falsehood, on the plea of doing good, would necessarily make way for another, till the limits which divide right and wrong would be completely broken down and every distinction between truth and falsehood be utterly confounded. If such latitude were allowed, even to obtain some good purpose, it would gradually debauch all human intercourse. The smallest deviation would naturally induce a pernicious habit, endanger the security of society, and violate an express law of God."

"There

"There is no tendency," said Sir John Belfield, "more to be guarded against among young persons of warm hearts and lively imaginations. The feeling will think falsehood good if it is meant to *do* good, and the fanciful will think it justifiable if it is ingenious."

Phœbe, in presenting her father with a dish of coffee, said in a half whisper, "surely, Papa, there can be no harm in speaking falsely on a subject where I am ignorant of the truth."

"There are occasions, my dear Phœbe," replied her father, "in which ignorance itself is a fault. Inconsiderateness is always one. It is your duty to deliberate before you speak. It is your duty not to deceive by your negligence in getting at the truth; or by publishing false information as truth, though you have reason to suspect it may be false. You well know who it is that associates him that *loveth* a lie, with him that *maketh* it."

"But, Sir," said Miss Sparkes, "if by a falsehood I could preserve a life, or save

my

my country, falsehood would then be meritorious, and I should glory in deceiving."

"Persons, Madam," said Mr. Stanley, "who, in debate, have a favourite point to carry, are apt to suppose extreme cases which *can* and *do* very rarely, if ever occur. This they do in order to compel the acquiescence of an opponent to what ought never to be allowed. It is a proud and fruitless speculation. The infinite power of God can never stand in need of the aid of a weak mortal to help him out in his difficulties. If he sees fit to preserve the life, or to save the country, he is not driven to such shifts. Omnipotence can extricate himself, and accomplish his own purposes, without endangering an immortal soul."

Miss Sparkes took her leave soon after in order, as she said, to go to the stables and take the Groom's opinion. Mr. Stanley insisted that her carriage should be brought round to the door, to which we all attended her. He inquired which was the lame horse.

Instead

Instead of answering, she went directly up to the animal, and after patting him with some technical jockey phrases, she fearlessly took up his hind leg, carefully examined the foot, and while she continued standing in what appeared to the ladies a perilous, and to me a disgusting situation, she ran over all the terms of the veterinary art with the Groom, and when Miss Stanley expressed some fear of her danger, and some dislike of her coarseness, she burst into a loud laugh, and slapping her on the shoulder, asked her if it was not better to understand the properties and diseases of so noble an animal, than to waste her time in studying confectionary with old Goody Comfit, or in teaching the Catechism to little ragged beggar-brats?

As soon as she was gone, the lively Phœbe who, her father says, has narrowly escaped being a wit herself, cried out; "Well, Papa, I must say that I think Miss Sparkes with all her faults is rather an agreeable woman." "I grant that she is amusing," returned he, "but I do not allow her to be quite agreeable.

able. Between these, Phœbe, there is a wide distinction. To a correct mind, no one can be agreeable who is incorrect. Propriety is so indispensable to agreeableness, that when a lady allows herself to make any, even the smallest, sacrifice of veracity, religion, modesty, candour, or the decorum of her sex, she may be shining, she may be shewy, she may be amusing, but she cannot, properly speaking, be agreeable. Miss Sparkes, I very reluctantly confess, does sometimes make these sacrifices, in a degree to make her friends look about them, though not in a degree to alarm her own principles. She would not tell a direct falsehood for the world: she does not indeed invent, but she embellishes, she enlarges, she exaggerates, she discolours. In her moral grammar there is no positive or comparative degree. Pink with her is scarlet. The noise of a popgun is a cannon. A shower is a tempest. A person of small fortune is a beggar. One in easy circumstances a Crœsus. A girl, if not perfectly well made, is deformity perso-

 nified;

nified; if tolerable, a Grecian Venus. Her favourites are Angels. Her enemies Dæmons.

"She would be thought very religious, and I hope that she will one day become so; yet she sometimes treats serious things with no small levity, and though she would not originally say a very hard word, yet she makes no scruple of repeating with great glee, profane stories told by others. Besides she possesses the dangerous art of exciting an improper idea, without using an improper word. Gross indecency would shock her, but she often verges so far towards indelicacy as to make Mrs. Stanley uneasy. Then she is too much of a genius to be tied down by any consideration of prudence. If a good thing occurs out it comes, without regard to time or circumstance. She would tell the same story to a Bishop, as to her chambermaid. If she says a right thing, which she often does, it is seldom in the right place. She makes her way in society without attaching many friends. Her bons mots are admired and repeated; yet I never met

met with a man of sense, who, though he may join in flattering her, did not declare, as soon as she was out of the room, that he would not for the world, that she should be his wife or daughter. It is irksome for her to converse with her own sex, while she little suspects that ours is not properly grateful for the preference with which she honours us."

"She is," continued Mr. Stanley, "charitable with her purse, but not with her tongue; she relieves her poor neighbours, and indemnifies herself by slandering her rich ones. She has however, many good qualities, is generous and compassionate, and I would on no account speak so freely of a lady whom I receive at my house, were it not that, if I were quite silent, after Phœbe's expressed admiration, she might conclude that I saw nothing to condemn in Miss Sparkes, and might be copying her faults, under the notion, that being entertaining made amends for every thing."

CHAP. XXXIII.

ONE morning, Sir John coming in from his ride gaily called out to me, as I was reading, "Oh Charles, such a piece of news! The Miss Flams are converted, They have put on tuckers—They were at church twice on Sunday—Blair's Sermons are sent for, and *you* are the reformer." This ludicrous address reminded Mr. Stanley, that Mr. Flam had told him we were all in disgrace, for not having called on the ladies, and it was proposed to repair this neglect.

"Now take notice," said Sir John, "if you do not see a new character assumed. Thinking Charles to be a fine man of the town, the modish racket, which indeed is their natural state, was played off, but it did not answer. As they probably, by this time suspect your character to be somewhat between

tween the Strephon and the Hermit, we shall now, in return, see something between the wood nymph and the nun. I shall not wonder if the extravagantly modish Miss Bell,

> Is now Pastora by a fountain's side.

Though I would not attribute the change to the cause assigned by Sir John, yet I confess we found, when we made our visit, no small revolution in Miss Bell Flam. The part of the Arcadian Nymph, the reading lady, the lover of retirement, the sentimental admirer of domestic life, the censurer of thoughtless dissipation, was each acted in succession, but so skilfully touched, that the shades of each melted in the other, without any of those violent transitions which a less experienced actress would have exhibited. Sir John slily, yet with affected gravity, assisting her to sustain this newly adopted character, which, however, he was sure would last no longer than the visit.

When we returned home, we met the Miss Stanleys in the garden, and joined

 them.

them. "Don't you admire," said Sir John, "the versatility of Miss Bell's genius? You, Charles, are not the first man on whom an assumed fondness for rural delights has been practised. A friend of mine was drawn in to marry, rather suddenly, a thorough-paced town-bred lady, by her repeated declarations of her passionate fondness for the country, and the rapture she expressed when rural scenery was the subject. All she knew of the country was, that she had now and then been on a party of pleasure at Richmond, in the fine summer months; a great dinner at the Star and Garter, gay company, a bright day, lovely scenery, a dance on the green, a partner to her taste, French horns on the water, altogether constituted a feeling of pleasure, from which she had really persuaded herself that she was fond of the country. But when all these concomitants were withdrawn, when she had lost the gay partner, the dance, the horns, the flattery, and the frolic, and nothing was left but her books, her own dull

dull mansion, her domestic employments, and the sober society of her husband, the pastoral vision vanished. She discovered, or rather he discovered, but too late, that the country had not only no charms for her, but that it was a scene of constant *ennui* and vapid dulness. She languished for the pleasure she had quitted, and he for the comforts he had lost. Opposite inclinations led to opposite pursuits; difference of taste, however, needed not to have led to a total disunion, had there been on the part of the lady such a degree of attachment, as might have induced a spirit of accommodation, or such a fund of principle as might have taught her the necessity of making those sacrifices, which affection, had it existed, would have rendered pleasant, or duty would have made light, had she been early taught self-government."

Miss Stanley, smiling, said, "she hoped Sir John had a little over-charged the picture." He defended himself by declaring he drew from the life, and that from his

 long

long observation he could present us with a whole gallery of such portraits. He left me to continue my walk with the two Miss Stanleys.

The more I conversed with Lucilla, the more I saw that good breeding in her was only the outward expression of humility, and not an art employed for the purpose of enabling her to do without it. We continued to converse on the subject of Miss Flam's fondness for the gay world. This introduced a natural expression of my admiration of Miss Stanley's choice of pleasures and pursuits, so different from those of most other women of her age.

With the most graceful modesty she said, "Nothing humbles me more than compliments; for when I compare what I hear, with what I feel, I find the picture of myself drawn by a flattering friend, so utterly unlike the original in my own heart, that I am more sunk by my own consciousness of the want of resemblance, than elated that another has not discovered it. It makes me feel like an impostor. If I contradict this favour-

favourable opinion, I am afraid of being accused of affectation; and if I silently swallow it, I am contributing to the deceit of passing for what I am not." This ingenuous mode of disclaiming flattery only raised her in my esteem, and the more as I told her such humble renunciation of praise could only proceed from that inward principle of genuine piety, and devout feeling, which made so amiable a part of her character.

"How little," said she, "is the human heart known except to him who made it! While a fellow creature may admire our apparent devotion, He who appears to be its object, witnesses the wandering of the heart which seems to be lifted up to him. He sees it roving to the ends of the earth, busied about any thing rather than himself; running after trifles which not only dishonour a Christian, but would disgrace a child. As to my very virtues, if I dare apply such a word to myself, they sometimes lose their character by not keeping their proper place. They become sins by in-

 fringing

fringing on higher duties. If I mean to perform an act of devotion, some crude plan of charity forces itself on my mind, and what with trying to drive out one and to establish the other, I rise dissatisfied and unimproved, and resting my sole hope, not on the duty which I have been performing, but on the mercy which I have been offending."

I assured her with all the simplicity of truth, and all the sincerity of affection, that this confession only served to raise my opinion of the piety she disclaimed, that such deep consciousness of imperfection, so quick a discernment of the slightest deviation, and such constant vigilance to prevent it, were the truest indications of an humble spirit; and that those who thus carefully guarded themselves against small errors, were in little danger of being betrayed into great ones.

She replied, smiling, that "she should not be so angry with vanity, if it would be contented to keep its proper place among the vices; but her quarrel with it was, that it

it would mix itself with our virtues, and rob us of their reward."

"Vanity, indeed," replied I, "differs from the other vices in this; *they* commonly are only opposite to the one contrary virtue, while this vice has a kind of ubiquity, is on the watch to intrude every where, and weakens all the virtues, which it cannot destroy. I believe vanity was the harpy of the ancient poets, which they tell us tainted whatever it touched."

"Self deception is so easy," replied Miss Stanley, "that I am even afraid of highly extolling any good quality, lest I should sit down satisfied with having borne my testimony in its favour, and so rest contented with the praise instead of the practice. Commending a right thing is a cheap substitute for doing it, with which we are too apt to satisfy ourselves."

"There is no mark," I replied, "which more clearly distinguishes that humility which has the love of God for its principle from its counterfeit, a false and superficial

cial politeness, than that, while this last flatters, in order to extort in return more praise than its due, humility, like the divine principle from which it springs, seeketh not even its own."

In answer to some further remark of mine, with an air of infinite modesty, she said, "I have been betrayed, Sir, into saying too much. It will, I trust, however, have the good effect of preventing you from thinking better of me than I deserve. In general, I hold it indiscreet to speak of the state of one's mind. I have been taught this piece of prudence by my own indiscretion. I once lamented to a lady the fault of which we have been speaking, and observed how difficult it was to keep the heart right. She so little understood the nature of this inward corruption, that she told in confidence to two or three friends, that they were all much mistaken in Miss Stanley, for though her character stood so fair with the world, she had secretly confessed to her that she was a great sinner."

I could

I could not forbear repeating, though she had chid me for it before, how much I had been struck with several instances of her indifference to the world, and her superiority to its pleasures. "Do you know," continued she, smiling, "that you are more my enemy, than the lady of whom I have been speaking? She only defamed my principles, but you are corrupting them. The world, I believe, is not so much a place as a nature. It is possible to be religious in a court, and worldly in a monastery. I find that the thoughts may be engaged too anxiously about so petty a concern as a little family arrangement; that the mind may be drawn off from better pursuits, and engrossed by things too trivial to name, as much as by objects more apparently wrong. The country is certainly favourable to religion, but it would be hard on the millions who are doomed to live in towns if it were exclusively favourable. Nor must we lay more stress on the accidental circumstance than it deserves. Nay I almost doubt if it is not too

too pleasant to be quite safe. An enjoyment which assumes a sober shape may deceive us, by making us believe we are practising a duty when we are only gratifying a taste."

"But do you not think," said I, "that there may be merit in the taste itself? May not a succession of acts, forming a habit, and that habit a good one, induce so sound a way of thinking, that it may become difficult to distinguish the duty from the taste, and to separate the principle from the choice? This I really believe to be the case in minds finely wrought and vigilantly watched."

I observed that however delightful the country might be great part of the year, yet there were a few winter months, when I feared it might be dull, though not in the degree Sir John's Richmond lady had found it.

With a smile of compassion at my want of taste, she said, "she perceived I was no gardener." "To me," added she, "the winter has charms of its own. If I were not

not afraid of the light habit of introducing providence on an occasion not sufficiently important, I would say that he seems to reward those who love their country well enough to live in it the whole year, by making the greater part of the winter the busy season for gardening operations. If I happen to be in town a few days only, every sun that shines, every shower that falls, every breeze that blows seems wasted, because I do not see the effect upon my plants." "But surely," said I, "the winter at least suspends the enjoyment. There is little pleasure in contemplating vegetation in its torpid state, in surveying

The naked shoots, barren as lances,

as Cowper describes the winter shrubbery.

"The pleasure is in the preparation," replied she. "When all appears dead and torpid to you idle spectators, all is secretly at work; nature is busy in preparing her treasures under ground, and art has a hand in the process. When the blossoms of summer are delighting your mere amateurs, then

then it is that we professional people," added she, laughing, "are really idle. The silent operations of the winter now produce themselves—the canvass of nature is covered,—the great artist has laid on his colours,—then we petty agents lay down our implements, and enjoy our leisure in contemplating *his* work."

I had never known her so communicative; but my pleased attention, instead of drawing her on, led her to check herself. Phœbe, who had been busily employed in trimming a flaunting yellow Azalia, now turned to me and said,—"Why it is only the Christmas month that our labours are suspended, and then we have so much pleasure, that we want no business; such in-door festivities and diversions, that that dull month is with us the gayest in the year." So saying, she called Lucilla to assist her in tying up the branch of an orange tree which the wind had broken.

I was going to offer my services when Mrs. Stanley joined us before I could obtain an answer to my question about these

Christ-

Christmas diversions. A stranger who had seen me pursuing Mrs. Stanley in her walks, might have supposed that not the daughter but the mother, was the object of my attachment. But with Mrs. Stanley I could always talk of Lucilla, with Lucilla I durst not often talk of herself.

The fond mother and I stood looking with delight on the fair gardeners. When I had admired their alacrity in these innocent pursuits, their fondness for retirement, and their cheerful delight in its pleasures; Mrs. Stanley replied, "Yes, Lucilla is half a nun. She likes the rule, but not the vow. Poor thing! her conscience is so tender, that she oftener requires encouragement than restraint. While she was making this plantation, she felt herself so absorbed by it., that she came to me one day, and said that her gardening work so fascinated her, that she found whole hours passed unperceived, and she began to be uneasy by observing that all cares and all duties were suspended

while

while she was disposing beds of Carnations, or knots of Anemonies. Even when she tore herself away, and returned to her employments, her flowers still pursued her, and the improvement of her mind gave way to the cultivation of her Geraniums."

"'I am afraid,' said the poor girl, 'that I must really give it up.' I would not hear of this. I would not suffer her to deny herself so pure a pleasure. She then suggested the expedient of limiting her time, and hanging up her watch in the conservatory to keep her within her prescribed bounds. She is so observant of this restriction, that when her allotted time is expired, she forces herself to leave off, even in the midst of the most interesting operation. By this limitation a treble end is answered. Her time is saved, self-denial is exercised, and the interest which would languish by protracting the work is kept in fresh vigour." I told Mrs. Stanley that I had observed her watch hanging in a citron-tree the day I came, but little thought it had a moral meaning.

meaning. She said, it had never been left there since I had been in the house, for fear of causing interrogatories." Here Mrs. Stanley left me to my meditations.

It is wisely ordered that all mortal enjoyments should have some alloy. I never tasted a pleasure since I had been at the Grove, I never witnessed a grace, I never heard related an excellence of Lucilla without a sigh that my beloved parents did not share my happiness. "How would they," said I, "delight in her delicacy, rejoice in her piety, love her benevolence, admire her humility, her usefulness! O how do children feel, who wound the peace of *living* parents by an unworthy choice, when not a little of my comfort springs from the certainty that the departed would rejoice in mine?" Even from their blessed abode, my grateful heart seems to hear them say, this is the creature we would have chosen for thee! This is the creature with whom we shall rejoice with thee through all eternity."

Yet such was my inconsistency, that

charmed

charmed as I was, that so young and lovely a woman could be so cheaply pleased, and delighted with that simplicity of taste which made her resemble my favourite heroine of Milton in her amusements, as well as in her domestic pursuits; still I longed to know what those Christmas diversions, so slightly hinted at, could be; diversions which could reconcile these girls to their absence not only from their green-house, but from London. I could hardly fear indeed to find at Stanley Grove, what the news-papers pertly call *Private Theatricals.* Still I suspected it might be some gay dissipation, not quite suited to their general character, nor congenial to their usual amusements. My mother's favourite rule of *consistency* strongly forced itself on my mind, though I tried to repel the suggestion as unjust and ungenerous.

Of what meannesses will not love be guilty! It drove me to have recourse to my friend Mrs. Comfit to dissipate my doubts. From her I learnt that that cold and comfortless season was mitigated at Stanley Grove

Grove by several feasts for the poor of different classes and ages. "Then, sir," continued she, "if you could see the blazing fires, and the abundant provisions! The roasting and the boiling and the baking. The house is all alive. On those days the drawers and shelves of Miss Lucilla's storeroom are completely emptied. 'Tis the most delightful bustle, sir, to see our young ladies tying on the good women's warm cloaks, fitting their caps and aprons, and sending home blankets to the infirm who cannot come themselves. The very little ones kneeling down on the ground to try on the poor girls' shoes; even little Miss Celia; and she is so tender to fit them exactly and not hurt them. Last feast-day, not finding a pair small enough for a poor little girl, she privately slipped off her own and put them on the child. It was some time before it was discovered that she herself was without shoes. We are all alive, sir.—Parlour and hall and kitchen, is all in motion! Books and business and walks, and gardening,

 all

all is forgotten for these few happy days."

How I hated myself for my suspicion! And how I loved the charming creatures who could find in these humble but exhilarating duties, an equivalent for the pleasures of the metropolis! "Surely," said I to myself, "my mother would call *this* consistency, when the amusements of a religious family have the same flavour with its business and its duties." My heart was more than easy; it was dilated, while I congratulated myself in the thought that there *were* young ladies to be found, who could spend a winter not only unrepiningly, but cheerfully and delightedly in the country.

I am aware that were I to repeat my conversations with Lucilla, I should subject myself to ridicule by recording such cold spiritless discourse on my own part. But I had not yet declared my attachment. I made it a point of duty not to violate my engagement with Mr. Stanley. I was not addressing declarations, but studying the character

character of her on whom the happiness of my life was to depend. I had resolved not to shew my attachment by any overt-act. I confined the expression of my affection to that *series of small quiet attentions*, which an accurate judge of the human heart has pronounced to be the surest avenue to a delicate mind. I had in the mean time, the inexpressible felicity to observe a constant union of feeling, as well as a general consonancy of opinion between us. Every sentiment seemed a reciprocation of sympathy, and every look, of intelligence. This unstudied correspondence enchanted me the more, as I had always considered that conformity of tastes was nearly as necessary to conjugal happiness, as a conformity of principles.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

One morning I took a ride alone to breakfast at Lady Aston's. Mr. Stanley having expressed a particular desire that I should cultivate the acquaintance of her son. "Sir George is not quite twenty," said he, "and your being a few years older, will make him consider your friendship as an honour to him; I am sure it will be an advantage."

In her own little family circle, I had the pleasure of seeing Lady Aston appear to more advantage than I had yet done. Her understanding is good and her affections are strong. She had received a too favourable prepossession of character from Mr. Stanley, and treated me with as much openness as if I had been his son.

The gentle girls animated by the spirit of their brother, seemed to derive both happiness and importance from his presence; while the amiable young Baronet himself won my affection by his engaging manners,

manners, and my esteem by his good sense, and his considerable acquirements in every thing which becomes a gentleman.

This visit exemplified a remark I had sometimes made, that shy characters, who from natural timidity are reserved in general society, open themselves with peculiar warmth and frankness to a few select friends, or to an individual of whom they think kindly. A distant manner is not always, as is suspected, the result of a cold heart, or a dull head; nor is gaiety necessarily connected with feeling. High animal spirits, though they often evaporate in mere talk, yet by their warmth and quickness of motion obtain the credit of strong sensibility; a sensibility, however, of which the heart is not always the fountain. While in the timid, that silence which is construed into pride, indifference, or want of capacity, is often the effect of keen feelings. Friendship is the genial climate in which such hearts disclose themselves: they flourish in the shade, and kindness alone makes them expand. A keen discerner will often detect

in such characters, qualities which are not always connected with

> the rattling tongue
> Of saucy and audacious eloquence.

When people who have seen little of each other are thrown together, nothing brings on free communication so quickly, or so pleasantly, as their being both intimate with a third person, for whom all parties entertain one common sentiment. Mr. Stanley seemed always a point of union between his neighbours and me.

After various topics had been discussed, Lady Aston remarked, that she could now trace the goodness of Providence in having so ordered events, as to make those things which she had so much dreaded at the time, work out advantages which could not have been otherwise obtained for her.

"I had a singular aversion," added she, "to the thoughts of removing to this place, and quitting Sir George's estate in Warwickshire, where I had spent the happiest years of my life. When I had the misfortune to lose him," (here a tear quietly strayed

strayed down her cheek,) "I resolved never to remove from the place where he died. I had fully persuaded myself that it was a duty to do all I could to cherish grief. I obliged myself as a law, to spend whole hours every day in walking round the place where he was buried. These melancholy visits, the intervals of which were filled with tears, prayers, and reading a few good, but not well chosen, books, made up the whole round of my sad existence. I had nearly forgotten that I had any duties to perform, that I had any mercies left. Almost all the effect which the sight of my children produced in me was, by their resemblance to their father, to put me in mind of what I had lost.

"I was not sufficiently aware how much more truly I should have honoured his memory by training his living representatives in such a manner, as he, had he been living, would have approved. My dear George," added she, smiling at her son through her tears, "was glad to get away to school, and my poor girls, when they lost the

company of their brother, lost all the little cheerfulness which my recluse habits had left them. We sunk into total inaction, and our lives became as comfortless as they were unprofitable."

"My dear Madam," said Sir George, in the most affectionate tone and manner, "I can only forgive myself from the consideration of my being then too young and thoughtless, to know the value of the mother, whose sorrows ought to have endeared my home to me, instead of driving me from it."

"They are *my* faults, my dear George, and not yours that I am relating. Few mothers would have acted like me; few sons differently from you. Your affectionate heart deserved a warmer return than my broken spirits were capable of making you. But I was telling you, Sir," said she, again addressing herself to me, "that the event of my coming to this place, not only became the source of my present peace, and of the comfort of my children, but that its result enables me to look forward with a

cheerful hope to that state where there is neither sin, sorrow, nor separation. The thoughts of death, which used to render me useless, now make me only serious. The reflection that 'the night cometh,' which used to extinguish my activity, now kindles it.

"Forgive me, Sir," added she, wiping her eyes, "these are not such tears as I then shed. These are tears of gratitude, I had almost said of joy. In the family at the Grove, Providence had been providing for me friends, for whom, I doubt not, I shall bless him in eternity.

"I had long been convinced of the importance of religion. I had always felt the insufficiency of the world to bestow happiness; but I had never before beheld religion in such a form. I had never been furnished with a proper substitute for the worldly pleasures which I yet despised. I did right in giving up diversions, but I did wrong in giving up employment, and in neglecting duties. I knew something of religion as a principle of fear, but I had no conception of

it as a motive to the love of God, and as the spring of active duty; nor did I consider it as a source of inward peace. Books had not been of any great service to me, for I had no one to guide me in the choice, or to assist me in the perusal. I went to my daily task of devotion with a heavy heart, and returned from it with no other sense of comfort but that I had not omitted it.

"My former friends and acquaintance had been decent and regular; but they had adopted religion as a form, and not as a principle. It was compliance, and not conviction. It was conformity to custom, and not the persuasion of the heart. Judge then how I must have been affected, in a state when sorrow and disappointment had made my mind peculiarly impressible, with the conversation and example of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley. I saw in them that religion was not a formal profession, but a powerful principle. It ran through their whole life and character. All the Christian graces were brought into action in a way, with a uniformity, and a beauty, which nothing

but Christian motives could have effected.

"The change which took place in my own mind, however, was progressive. The strict consonance which I observed between their sentiments and actions, and those of Dr. Barlow and Mr. Jackson, strengthened and confirmed mine. This similiarity in all points, was a fresh confirmation that they were all right. The light of religion gradually grew stronger, and the way more smooth. It was literally a 'lamp to my feet;' for I walked more safely as I saw more clearly. My difficulties insensibly lessened, and my doubts disappeared. I still indeed continue hourly to feel much cause to be humbled, but none to be unhappy."

When Lady Aston had done speaking, Sir George said, "I owe a thousand obligations to my mother, but not one so great as her introduction of me to Mr. Stanley. He has given a bent and bias to my sentiments, habits, and pursuits, to which I trust every day will add fresh strength. I look

up to him as my model: happy if I may, in any degree, be able to form myself by it. Till I had the happiness of knowing you, Sir, I preferred the company of Dr. Barlow and Mr. Stanley, to that of any *young* man with whom I am acquainted."

After some further conversation, in which Sir George, with great credit to himself, bore a considerable part; Miss Aston took courage to ask me if I would accompany them all into the garden, as she wished me to carry home intelligence to Miss Stanley, of the flourishing state of some American plants which had been raised under her direction. To speak the truth, I had for some time been trying to bring Lucilla on the tapis, but had not found a plausible pretence. I now enquired if Miss Stanley directed their gardening pursuits. "She directs *all* our pursuits," said the two bashful, blushing girls, who now for the first time in their lives, spoke both at once; the subject kindling an energy in their affectionate hearts, which

which even their timidity could not rein in.

"I thought, Clara," said Sir George, "that Miss *Phœbe* Stanley too had assisted in laying out the flower garden. Surely she is not behind her sister in any thing that is kind, or any thing that is elegant." His complexion heightened as he spoke, and he expressed himself with an emphasis which I had not before observed in his manner of speaking. I stole a glance at Lady Aston, whose meek eye glistened with pleasure, at the earnestness with which her son spoke of the lovely Phœbe. My rapid imagination instantly shot forward to an event, which some years hence will probably unite two families so worthy of each other. Lady Aston, who already honours me with her confidence, afterwards confirmed my suspicions on a subject, about which nothing but the extreme youth of both parties made her backward to express the secret hope she fondly entertained.

In our walk round the gardens, the Miss

Astons continued to vie with each other, who should be warmest in the praise of their young friends at the Grove. To Miss Stanley, they gratefully declared they owed any little taste, knowlege, or love of goodness which they themselves might possess.

It was delightful to observe these quiet girls warmed and excited by a subject so interesting. I was charmed to see them so far from feeling any shadow of envy at the avowed superiority of their young friends, and so unanimously eloquent in the praise of merit so eclipsing.

After having admired the plants, of which I promised to make a favourable report, I was charged with a large and beautiful bouquet for the young ladies at the Grove. They then drew me to the prettiest spot in the grounds. While I was admiring it, Miss Clara with a blush and some hesitation, begged leave to ask my advice about a little rustic building, which she and her sisters were just going to raise in honour of the Miss Stanleys. It was

to

to be dedicated to them, and called the Temple of Friendship. "My brother," said she, "is kindly assisting us. The materials are all prepared, and we have now only to fix them up."

She then put into my hands a little plan. I highly approved it; venturing, however, to suggest some trifling alterations, which I told them I did, in order to implicate myself a little in the pleasant project. How proud was I when Clara added, "that Miss Stanley had expressed a high opinion of my general taste!"—They all begged me to look in on them in my rides, and assist them with my farther counsel; adding, that, above all things, I must keep it a secret at the Grove.

Lady Aston said, "that she expected our whole party to dine at the Hall some day next week." Her daughters entreated that it might be postponed till the latter end, by which time they doubted not their little edifice would be compleated. Sir George then told me, that his sisters had requested him to furnish an inscrip-

tion, or to endeavour to procure one from me. He added his wishes to theirs that I would comply. They all joined so earnestly in the intreaty that I could not withstand them, "albeit unused to the *rhyming* mood."

After some deliberations, Friday in the next week was fixed upon for the party at the Grove to dine at Aston-hall, and I was to carry the invitation. I took a respectful leave of the excellent Lady of the mansion, and an affectionate one of the young people; with whom the familiar intercourse of this quiet morning had contributed to advance my friendly acquaintance, more than could have been done by many ceremonious meetings.

When I returned to the Grove, which was but just in time to dress for dinner, I spoke with sincere satisfaction of the manner in which I had passed the morning. It was beautiful to observe the honest delight, the ingenuous kindness, with which Lucilla heard me commend the Miss Astons. No little disparaging hint

hint on the one hand, gently to let down her friends, nor on the other, no such exaggerated praise as I have sometimes seen employed as a screen for envy, or as a trap to make the hearer lower, what the speaker had too highly raised.

I dropped in at Aston-Hall two or three times in the course of the week, as well to notice the progress of the work, as to carry my inscription, in which, as Lucilla was both my subject and my muse, I succeeded rather better than I expected.

On the Friday, according to appointment, our whole party went to dine at the Hall. In our way, Mr. Stanley expressed the pleasure it gave him, that Lady Aston was now so convinced of the duty of making home agreeable to her son, as delightedly to receive such of her friends as were warmly disposed to become his.

Sir George, who is extremely well-bred, did the honours admirably for so young a man, to the great relief of his excellent mother, whom long retirement had rendered habitually

habitually timid in a party, of which some were almost strangers.

The Miss Astons had some difficulty to restrain their young guests from running directly to look at the progress of the American plants; but as they grew near the mysterious spot, they were not allowed to approach it before the allotted time.

After dinner, when the whole party were walking in the garden, Lady Aston was desired by her daughters to conduct her company to a winding grass walk, near the little building, but from whence it was not visible. While they were all waiting at the appointed place, the two elder Miss Astons gravely took a hand of Lucilla, Sir George and I each presented a hand to Phœbe, and in profound silence, and great ceremony, we led them up the turf steps into this simple but really pretty temple. The initials of Lucilla and Phœbe were carved in cypher over a little rustic window, under which was written,

"*Sacred to Friendship.*"

In two niches, prepared for the purpose, we severally seated the two astonished nymphs, who seemed absolutely enchanted. Above was the inscription in large Roman letters.

The Astons looked so much alive, that they might have been mistaken for Stanleys, who, in their turn, were so affected with this tender mark of friendship, that they looked as tearful as if they had been Astons. After reading the inscription, "my dear Clara," said Lucilla to Miss Aston, "where *could* you get these beautiful verses? Though the praise they convey is too flattering to be just, it is too delicate not to please. The lines are at once tender and elegant." "We got them," said Miss Aston with a sweet vivacity, "where we get every thing that is good, from Stanley-Grove," bowing modestly to me.

How was I elated; and how did Lucilla blush! but though she now tried to qualify her flattery, she could not recal it. And I would not allow myself to be robbed of the

pure

pure delight it had given me. All the company seemed to enjoy her confusion and my pleasure.

I forgot to mention, that as we crossed the Park, we had seen enter the house, through a back avenue, a procession of little girls neatly dressed in an uniform. In a whisper, I asked Lady Aston what it meant. "You are to know," replied her Ladyship, "that my daughters adopt all Miss Stanley's plans, and among the rest, that of associating with all their own indulgences some little act of charity, that while they are receiving pleasure, they may also be conferring it. The opening of the temple of Friendship is likely to afford too much gratification, to be passed over without some such association. So my girls give to-day a little feast, with prizes of merit, to their village school, and to a few other deserving young persons."

When we had taken our seats in the temple, Phœbe suddenly cried out, clasping her

her hands in an extasy, "Only look, Lucilla! there is no end to the enchantment. It is all fairy land." On casting our eyes as she directed, we were agreeably surprised with observing a large kind of temporary shed or booth at some distance from us. It was picturesquely fixed near an old spreading oak, and was ingeniously composed of branches of trees, fresh and green. Under the oak stood ranged the village maids. We walked to the spot. The inside of the booth was hung round with caps, aprons, bonnets, handkerchiefs, and other coarse, but neat articles of female dress. On a rustic table was laid a number of Bibles, and specimens of several kinds of coarse works, and little manufactures. The various performances were examined by the company; some presents were given to all. But additional prizes were awarded by the young patronesses, to the best specimens of different work; to the best spinners, the best knitters, the best manufacturers of split straw, and the

best

best performers in plain work, I think they called it.

Three grown up young women, neatly dressed and of modest manners, stood behind. It appeared that one of them had taken such good care of her young sisters and brothers, since their mother's death, and had so prudently managed her father's house, that it had saved him from an imprudent second choice. Another had postponed for many months, a marriage in which her heart was engaged, because she had a paralytic grandmother whom she attended day and night, and whom nothing, not even love itself, could tempt her to desert. Death had now released the aged sufferer: the wedding was to take place next Sunday. The third had for above a year worked two hours every day, over and above the set time, and applied the gains to clothe the orphan child of a deceased friend. She also was to accompany her lover to the altar on Sunday, but had made it a condition of her marrying him, that she should be allowed

allowed to continue her supernumerary hours work, for the benefit of the poor orphan.

All three had been exemplary in their attendance at church, as well as in their general conduct. The fair Patronesses presented each with a handsome Bible, and with a complete, plain, but very neat suit of apparel.

While these gifts were distributing, I whispered Sir John that one such ticket as we were each desired to take for Squallini's benefit, would furnish the cottages of these poor girls. "And it *shall*," replied he with emphasis. "How little a way will that sum go in superfluities, which will make two honest couple happy! How costly is vanity, how cheap is charity!"

"Can these happy useful young creatures be my little, inactive, insipid Astons, Charles?" whispered Mr. Stanley, as we walked away to leave the girls to sit down to their plentiful supper, which was spread on a long table under the oak, without the

green booth. This group of figures made an interesting addition to the scenery, when we got back to the Temple, and often attracted our attention while we were engaged in conversation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXV.

THE company were not soon weary of admiring the rustic building, which seemed raised as if by the stroke of a magician's wand, so rapidly had it sprung up. They were delighted to find that their pleasure was to be prolonged by drinking tea in the temple.

While we were at tea Mr. Stanley addressing himself to me, said, " I have always forgotten to ask you, Charles, if your high expectations of pleasure from the society in London had quite answered?"

" I was entertained, and I was disappointed," replied I. " I always found the pleasure of the moment not heightened, but effaced by the succeeding moment. The ever restless, rolling tide of new intelligence

gence at once gratified and excited the passion for novelty, which I found to be *le grand poisson qui mange les petits*. This successive abundance of fresh supply gives an ephemeral importance to every thing, and a lasting importance to nothing. We skimmed every topic, but dived into none. Much desultory talk, but little discussion. The combatants skirmished like men whose arms were kept bright by constant use; who were accustomed to a flying flight, but who avoided the fatigue of coming to close quarters. What was old, however momentous, was rejected as dull; what was new, however insignificant, was thought interesting. Events of the past week were placed with those beyond the flood; and the very existence of occurrences which continued to be matter of deep interest with us in the country, seemed there totally forgotten.

"I found, too, that the inhabitants of the metropolis had a standard of merit of their own; that knowlege of the town was concluded to be knowlege of the world; that

that local habits, reigning phrases, temporary fashions, and an acquaintance with the surface of manners, was supposed to be knowlege of mankind. Of course, he who was ignorant of the topics of the hour, and the anecdotes of a few modish leaders, was ignorant of human nature."

Sir John observed, that I was rather too young to be a *praiser of past times*, yet he allowed that the standard of conversation was not so high, as it had been in the time of my father, by whose reports my youthful ardour had been inflamed. He did not indeed suppose that men were less intellectual now, but they certainly were less colloquially intellectual. "For this," added he, "various reasons may be assigned. In London, man is every day becoming less of a social, and more of a gregarious animal. Crowds are as little favourable to conversation as to reflection. He finds, therefore, that he may figure in the mass with less expence of mind: and as to women they figure at no expence at all. They find that by mixing with myriads, they may carry

on the daily intercourse of life, without being obliged to bring a single idea to enrich the common stock.

"I do not wonder," said I, "that the dull and the uninformed love to shelter their insignificance in a crowd. In mingling with the multitude, their deficiencies elude detection. The vapid and the ignorant are like a bad play; they owe the little figure they make to the dress, the scenery, the music, and the company.—The noise and the glare take off all attention from the defects of the work. The spectator is amused, and he does not enquire whether it is with the piece or with the accompaniments. The end is attained, and he is little solicitous about the means. But an intellectual woman, like a well written drama, will please at home without all these aids and adjuncts, nay the beauties of the superior piece, and of the superior woman, will rise on a more intimate survey. But you were going, Sir John, to assign other causes for the decline and fall of conversation."

"One very affecting reason," replied he, "is that the alarming state of public affairs fills all men's minds with one momentous object. As every Englishman is a patriot, every patriot is a politician. It is natural that that subject should fill every mouth, which occupies every heart, and that little room should be left for extraneous matter."

"I should accept this," said I, "as a satisfactory vindication, had I heard that the same absorbing cause had thinned the public places, or diminished the attraction of the private resorts of dissipation."

"There is a third reason," said Sir John. "Polite literature has in a good degree given way to experimental philosophy. The admirers of science assert, that the last was the age of words, and that this is the age of things. A more substantial kind of knowlege has partly superseded these elegant studies, which have caught such hold on your affections."

"I heartily wish," replied I, "that the new pursuits may be found to make men

wiser; they certainly have not made them more agreeable."

"It is affirmed," said Mr. Stanley, "that the prevailing philosophical studies have a religious use, and that they naturally tend to elevate the heart to the great Author of the Universe."

"I have but one objection to that assertion," replied Sir John, "namely, that it is not true. This should seem indeed, to be their direct tendency, yet experiment, which you know is the soul of philosophy, has proved the contrary."

He then adduced some instances in our own country, which I forbear to name, that clearly evinced, that this was not their necessary consequence; adding however, a few great names on the more honourable side. He next adverted to the Bailies, the Condorcets, the D'Alemberts, and the Lalandes, as melancholy proofs of the inefficacy of mere science to make Christians.

"Far be it from me," said Sir John, "to undervalue philosophical pursuits. The

The modern discoveries are extremely important, especially in their application to the purposes of common life: but where these are pursued exclusively, I cannot help preferring the study of the great classic authors, those exquisite masters of life and manners, with whose spirit, conversation, twenty or thirty years ago, was so richly impregnated."

"I confess," said I, "that there may be more matter, but there is certainly less mind in the reigning pursuits. The reputation of skill, it is true, may be obtained at a much less expence of time and intellect. The comparative cheapness of the acquisition holds out the powerful temptation of more credit, with less labour. A sufficient knowlege of botany or chemistry to make a figure in company is easily obtained, while a thorough acquaintance with the historians, poets, and orators of antiquity requires much time, and close application." "But," exclaimed Sir John, "can the fashionable studies pretend to give the same expansion to the mind, the

 same

same elevation to the sentiments, the same energy to the feelings, the same stretch and compass to the understanding, the same correctness to the taste, the same grace and spirit to the whole moral and intellectual man?"

"For my own part," replied I, "so far from saying with Hamlet, 'Man delights not me, nor woman neither,' I confess, I have little delight in any thing else. The study of the human mind is, of merely human studies, my chief pleasure. As a man, man is the creature with whom I have to do, and the varieties in his character interest me more than all the possible varieties of mosses, and shells, and fossils. To view this compound creature in the complexity of his actions, as pourtrayed by the hand of those immortal masters, Tacitus and Plutarch; to view him in the struggle of his passions, as displayed by Euripides and Shakespeare; to contemplate him in the blaze of his eloquence, by the two rival orators of Greece and Rome, is more congenial to my feelings, than the ablest dis-

quisition

quisition of which matter was ever the subject." Sir John, who is a passionate, and rather too exclusive, an admirer of classic lore, warmly declared himself of my opinion.

"I went to town," replied I, "with a mind eager for intellectual pleasure. My memory was not quite unfurnished with passages which I thought likely to be adverted to, and which might serve to embellish conversation, without incurring the charge of pedantry. But though most of the men I conversed with were my equals in education, and my superiors in talent, there seemed little disposition to promote such topics as might bring our understandings into play. Whether it is that business, active life, and public debate, absorb the mind, and make men consider society rather as a scene to rest than to exercise it, I know not; certain it is that they brought less into the treasury of conversation than I expected; not because they were poor, but proud, or idle, and reserved their talents and acquisitions for higher occasions. The most opu-

lent possessors, I often found the most penurious contributors."

"*Rien de trop*," said Mr. Stanley, "was the favourite maxim of an Author*, whom I am not apt to quote for rules of moral conduct. Yet its adoption would be a salutary check against excess in all our pursuits. If polite learning is undervalued by the mere man of science; it is perhaps over-rated by the mere man of letters. If it dignifies retirement, and exalts society, it is not the great business of life; it is not the prime fountain of moral excellence."

"Well, so much for *man*," said Sir John; "but Charles, you have not told us what you had to say of *woman*, in your observations on society."

"As to woman," replied I, "I declare that I found more propensity to promote subjects of taste and elegant speculation among some of the superior class of females, than in many of my own sex. The more prudent, however, are restrained through

* Frederick the Great, King of Prussia.

fear

fear of the illiberal sarcasms of men, who, not contented to suppress their own faculties, ridicule all intellectual exertion in women, though evidently arising from a modest desire of improvement, and not the vanity of hopeless rivalry."

"Charles is always the Paladin of the reading ladies," said Sir John. "I do not deny it," replied I, "if they bear their faculties meekly. But I confess that what is sneeringly called a learned lady, is to me far preferable to a scientific one, such as I encountered one evening, who talked of the fulcrum, and the lever, and the statera, which she took care to tell us was the Roman steel-yard, with all the sang-froid of philosophical conceit."

"Scientific men," said Sir John, "are in general admirable for their simplicity, but in a technical woman I have seldom found a grain of taste or elegance."

"I own," replied I, "I should greatly prefer a fair companion, who could modestly discriminate between the beauties of Virgil and Milton, to one who was al-

ways dabbling in chemistry, and who came to dinner with dirty hands from the laboratory. And yet I admire chemistry too; I am now only speaking of that knowlege which is desirable in a female companion; for knowlege I must have. But arts, which are of immense value in manufactures, won't make my wife's conversation entertaining to me. Discoveries which may greatly improve dyeing and bleaching, will add little to the delights of our summer evening's walk, or winter fire-side."

The ladies, Lucilla especially, smiled at my warmth. I felt that there was approbation in her smile, and though I thought I had said too much already, it encouraged me to go on. "I repeat that, next to religion, whatever relates to human manners, is most attracting to human creatures. To turn from conversation to composition.—What is it that excites so feeble an interest, in perusing that finely written poem of the *Abbé de Lille*, "*Les Jardins?*" It is because his garden has no

no cultivators, no inhabitants, no men and women. What confers that powerful charm on the descriptive parts of Paradise Lost? A fascination, I will venture to affirm, paramount to all the lovely and magnificent scenery which adorns it. Eden itself with all its exquisite landscape, would excite a very inferior pleasure did it exhibit only inanimate beauties. 'Tis the proprietors, 'tis the inhabitants, 'tis the *live stock*, of Eden, which seize upon the affections, and twine about the heart. The gardens, even of Paradise, would be dull without the gardeners. 'Tis mental excellence, 'tis moral beauty which completes the charm. Where this is wanting, landscape poetry, though it may be read with pleasure, yet the interest it raises is cold. It is admired, but seldom remembered, praised, but seldom quoted. It leaves no definite idea on the mind. If general, it is indistinct; if minute, tedious."

"It must be confessed," said Sir John, "that some poets are apt to forget that the finest representation of nature is only the

scene, not the object; the canvass, not the portrait. We had indeed some time ago, so much of this gorgeous scene-painting, so much splendid poetical botany, so many amorous flowers, and so many vegetable courtships; so many wedded plants; roots transformed to nymphs, and dwelling in emerald palaces; that some how or other truth and probability, and nature, and man, slipt out of the picture, though it must be allowed that genius held the pencil."

"In Mason's English Garden," replied I, "Alcanda's precepts would have been cold, had there been no personification. The introduction of character dramatizes what else would have been frigidly didactic. Thomson enriches his landscape with here and there a figure, drawn with more correctness than warmth, with more nature than spirit, but exalts it every where by moral allusion and religious reference. The scenery of Cowper is perpetually animated with sketches of character, enlivened with portraits from real life, and the exhibition

hibition of human manners and passions. His most exquisite descriptions owe their vividness to moral illustration.—Loyalty, liberty, patriotism, charity, piety, benevolence, every generous feeling, every glowing sentiment, every ennobling passion, grows out of his descriptive powers.—His matter always bursts into mind.—His shrubbery, his forest, his flower garden, all produce

Fruits worthy of Paradise,

and lead to immortality."

Mr. Stanley said, adverting again to the subject of conversation, it was an amusement to him to observe, what impression the first introduction to general society made on a mind conversant with books, but to whom the world was in a manner new.

"I believe," said Sir John, "that an overflowing commerce, and the excessive opulence it has introduced, though favourable to all the splendors of art, and mechanic ingenuity, yet have lowered the standard of taste, and debilitated the mental energies. They are advantageous to

luxury, but fatal to intellect. It has added to the brilliancy of the drawing-room itself, but deducted from that of the inhabitant. It has given perfection to our mirrors, our candelabras, our gilding, our inlaying, and our sculpture, but it has communicated a torpor to the imagination and enervated our intellectual vigour."

"In one way," said Mr. Stanley, smiling, "luxury has been favourable to literature. From the unparalleled splendor of our printing, paper, engraving, illuminating, and binding, luxury has caused more books to be purchased, while from the growth of time-absorbing dissipation, it causes fewer to be read. Even where books are not much considered as the vehicle of instruction, they are become an indispensable appendage to elegance. But I believe, we were much more familiar with our native poets in their former plain garb, than since they have been attired in the gorgeous dress which now decorates our shelves.

"Poetry," continued Mr. Stanley, "has

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of late too much degenerated into personal satire, persiflage, and caricature, among one class of writers; while among another, it has exhibited the vagrancies of genius, without the inspiration; the exuberance of fancy, without the curb of judgment, and the eccentricities of invention, without the restrictions of taste. The image has been strained, while the verse has been slackened. We have had pleonasm without fulness, and facility without force. Redundancy has been mistaken for plenitude, flimsiness for ease, and distortion for energy. An over desire of being natural, has made the poet feeble, and the rage for being simple has sometimes made him silly. The sensibility is sickly, and the elevation vertiginous."

"To Cowper," said Sir John, "master of melody as he is, the mischief is partly attributable. Such an original must naturally have a herd of imitators. If they cannot attain to his excellencies, his faults are always attainable. The resemblance between the master and the scholar is found chiefly in

 his

his defects. The determined imitator of an easy writer becomes vapid, of a sublime one, absurd. Cowper's ease appeared his most imitable charm: but ease aggravated is insipidity. His occasional negligences his disciples adopted uniformly. In Cowper there might sometimes be carelessness in the verse, but the verse itself was sustained by the vigour of the sentiment. The imitator forgot that his strength lay in the thought; that his buoyant spirit always supported itself; that the figure though amplified was never distorted; the image though bold was never incongruous, and the illustration though new was never false.

"The evil, however," continued Sir John, "seems to be correcting itself. The real genius, which exists in several of this whimsical school, I trust will at length lead them to prune their excrescences, and reform their youthful eccentricities. Their good sense will teach them that the surest road to fame, is to condescend to tread in the luminous track of their great precursor in the art.

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They will see that deviation is not always improvement; that whoever wants to be better than nature, will infallibly be worse; that truth in taste is as obvious as in morals, and as certain as in mathematics. In other quarters, both the Classic and the Gothic music are emulously soaring, and I hail the restoration of genuine poetry and pure taste."

"I must not," said I, "loquacious as I have already been, dismiss the subject of conversation, without remarking that I found there was one topic, which seemed as uniformly avoided by common consent, as if it had been banished by the interdict of absolute authority! and that some forfeiture, or at least dishonour and disgrace were to follow it on conviction —I mean religion?"

"Surely, Charles," said Sir John, "you would not convert general conversation into a divinity school, and friendly societies into debating clubs."

"Far from it," replied I, "nor do I desire that ladies and gentlemen over their

tea and coffee should rehearse their articles of faith or fill the intervals of carving and eating with introducing dogmas, or discussing controversies. I do not wish to erect the social table, which was meant for innocent relaxation, in an arena, for theological combatants. I only wish, as people live so much together, that if, when out of the multitude of topics which arise in conversation, an unlucky wight happens to start a serious thought, I could see a cordial recognition of its importance; I wish, I could see a disposition to pursue it, instead of a chilling silence which obliges him to draw in, as if he had dropped something dangerous to the state, or inimical to the general cheerfulness, or derogatory to his own understanding. I only desire, that as, without any effort on the part of the speaker, but merely from the overflowing fulness of a mind habitually occupied with one leading concern, we easily perceive that one of the company is a lawyer, another a soldier, a third a physician; I only wish, that we could oftener discover

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from the same plenitude, so hard to conceal where it exists, that we were in a company of Christians."

"We must not expect in our days," said Mr. Stanley, "to see revive that animating picture of the prevalence of religious intercourse given by the prophet—'Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.' And yet one cannot but regret that, in select society, men well informed as we know, well principled as we hope, having one common portion of being to fill, having one common faith, one common father, one common journey to perform, one common termination to that journey, and one common object in view beyond it, should, when together, be so unwilling to advert occasionally to those great points, which doubtless often occupy them in secret; that they should on the contrary adopt a sort of inverted hypocrisy, and wish to appear worse than they really are; that they should be so backward to give or to gain information, to lend or to borrow lights, in a matter in which they are all

all equally interested; which cannot be the case in any other possible subject."

"In all human concerns," said I, "we find that those dispositions, tastes, and affections, which are brought into exercise, flourish, while others are smothered by concealment." "It is certain," replied Mr. Stanley, "that knowlege which is never brought forward, is apt to decline. Some feelings require to be excited in order to know if they exist. In short, topics of every kind, which are kept totally out of sight, make a fainter impression on the mind, than such as are occasionally introduced. Communication is a great strengthener of any principle. Feelings, as well as ideas, are often elicited by collision. Thoughts that are never to be produced, in time seldom present themselves, while mutual interchange almost creates as well as cultivates them. And as to the social affections, I am persuaded that men would love each other more cordially; good-will and kindness would be inconceivably promoted, were they in the ha-

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bit of maintaining that sort of intercourse, which would keep up a mutual regard for their eternal interests, and lead them more to consider each other as candidates for the same immortality through the same common hope."

Just as he had ceased to speak, we heard a warbling of female voices, which came softened to us by distance, and the undulation of the air. The little band under the oak had finished their cheerful repast and arranged themselves in the same regular procession in which they had arrived. They stood still at a respectful distance from the temple, and in their artless manner sung Addison's beautiful version of the twenty-third Psalm, which the Miss Astons had taught them because it was a favourite with their mother.

Here the setting sun reminded us to retreat to the house. Before we quitted the temple, however, Sir George Aston ventured modestly to intimate a wish, that if it pleased the Almighty to spare our lives, the

same

same party should engage always to celebrate this anniversary in the Temple of Friendship, which should be finished on a larger scale, and rendered less unworthy to receive such guests. The ladies smiled assentingly. Phœbe applauded rapturously. Sir John Belfield and I warmly approved the proposal. Mr. Stanley said, it could not but meet with his cordial concurrence, as it would involve the assurance of an annual visit from his valued friends.

As we walked into the house, Lady Aston, who held by my arm, in answer to the satisfaction I expressed at the day I had passed, said, "We owe what little we are and do under Providence to Mr. Stanley. You will admire his discriminating mind, when I tell you that he recommends these little exhibitions for my daughters far more than to his own. He says, that they, being naturally cheerful, and habitually active, require not the incentive of company to encourage them. But that for my poor timid inactive girls, the support and animating

mating presence of a few chosen friends just give them that degree of life and spirit, which serves to warm their hearts, and keep their minds in motion."

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Miss Sparkes came to spend the next day according to her appointment. Mr. Flam, who called accidently, staid to dinner. Mr. and Mrs. Carlton had been previously invited. After dinner, the conversation chanced to turn upon domestic economy, a quality which Miss Sparkes professed to hold in the most sovereign contempt.

After some remark of Mrs. Stanley, in favour of the household virtues, Mr. Carlton said, "Mr. Addison in the Spectator, and Dr. Johnson in the Rambler, have each given us a lively picture of a vulgar, ungentlewoman-like, illiterate housewife. The notable woman of the one suffocated her guests at night with drying herbs in their chamber, and tormented them all day with plans of economy, and lectures on management. The economist of the other ruined

ruined her husband by her parsimonious extravagance, if I may be allowed to couple contradictions; by her tent-stitch hangings for which she had no walls, and her embroidery for which she had no use. The poor man pathetically laments her detestable catalogue of made-wines, which hurt his fortune by their profusion, and his health by not being allowed to drink them till they were sour. Both ladies are painted as domestic tyrants, whose husbands had no peace, and whose children had no education."

"Those coarse housewifes," said Sir John, "were exhibited as *warnings*. It was reserved for the pen of Richardson to exhibit *examples*. This author, with deeper and juster views of human nature, a truer taste for the proprieties of female character, and a more exact intuition into real life, than any other writer of fabulous narrative, has given in his heroines, exemplifications of elegantly cultivated minds, combined with the sober virtues of domestic economy. In no other writer of ficti-

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tious adventures has the triumph of religion and reason over the passions, and the now almost exploded doctrines of filial obedience, and the household virtues, their natural concomitants, been so successfully blended. Whether the works of this most original, but by no means faultless writer, were cause or effect, I know not: whether these well-imagined examples induced the ladies of that day 'to study household good;' or whether the then existing ladies, by their acknowleged attention to feminine concerns, furnished Richardson with living models, I cannot determine. Certain it is, that the novel-writers of the subsequent period, have in general been as little disposed to represent these qualities as forming an indispensable part of the female character, as the contemporary young ladies themselves have been to supply them with patterns. I a little fear that the predominance of this sort of reading, has contributed its full share to bring such qualities into contempt."

Miss Sparkes characteristically observed

that

that "the meanest understanding and most vulgar education, were competent to form such a wife as the generality of men preferred,—that a man of talents, dreading a rival, always took care to secure himself by marrying a fool."

"Always excepting the present company, Madam, I presume," said Mr. Stanley laughing. "But pardon me, if I differ from you. That many men are sensual in their appetites, and low in their relish of intellectual pleasures, I confess. That many others, who are neither sensual, nor of mean attainments, prefer women whose ignorance will favour their indolent habits, and whom it requires no exertion of mind to entertain, I allow also. But permit me to say, that men of the most cultivated minds, men who admire talents in a woman, are still of opinion, that *domestic* talents can never be dispensed with: and I totally dissent from you in thinking that these qualities infer the absence of higher attainments,

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and necessarily imply a sordid or a vulgar mind.

"Any ordinary art, after it is once discovered, may be practised by a very common understanding. In this, as in every thing else, the kind arrangements of providence are visible, because, as the common arts employ the mass of mankind, they could not be universally carried on, if they were not of easy and cheap attainment. Now cookery is one of these arts, and I agree with you, Madam, in thinking that a mean understanding, and a vulgar education, suffice to make a good cook. But a cook or housekeeper, and a lady qualified to wield a considerable establishment, are two very different characters. To prepare a dinner, and to conduct a great family, require talents of a very different size: and one reason why I would never chuse to marry a woman ignorant of domestic affairs is, that she who wants, or she who despises this knowlege, must possess that previous bad judgment which,

which, as it prevented her from seeing this part of her duty, would be likely to operate on other occasions."

"I entirely agree with Mr. Stanley," said Mr. Carlton. "In general I look upon the contempt, or the fulfilment, of these duties as pretty certain indications of the turn of mind from which the one or the other proceeds. I allow, however, that *with* this knowlege a lady may unhappily have overlooked more important acquisitions; but *without* it I must ever consider the female character as defective in the texture, however it may be embroidered and spangled on the surface."

Sir John Belfield declared, that though he had not that natural antipathy to a wit, which some men have; yet unless the wildness of a wit was tamed like the wildness of other animals, by domestic habits, he himself would not chuse to venture on one. He added, that he should pay a bad compliment to Lady Belfield, who had so much higher claims to his esteem, if he were to allege that these habits were the determin-

ing cause of his choice, yet had he seen no such tendencies in her character, he should have suspected her power of making him as happy as she had done.

"I confess with shame," said Mr. Carlton, "that one of the first things which touched me with any sense of my wife's merit, was the admirable good sense she discovered in the direction of my family. Even at the time that I had most reason to blush at my own conduct, she never gave me cause to blush for hers. The praises constantly bestowed on her elegant yet prudent arrangements for my friends, flattered my vanity, and raised her in my opinion, though they did not lead me to do her full justice."

The two ladies who were thus agreeably flattered, looked modestly grateful. Mr. Stanley said, "I was going to endeavour at removing Miss Sparkes's prejudices, by observing how much this domestic turn brings the understanding into action. The operation of good sense is requisite in making the necessary calculations for a great

great family in a hundred ways. Good sense is required to teach that a perpetually recurring small expence is more to be avoided, than an incidental great one; while it shows that petty savings cannot retrieve an injured estate. The story told by Johnson of a lady, who,, while ruining her fortune by excessive splendor and expence, yet refused to let a two shilling mango be cut at her table, exemplifies exactly my idea. Shabby curtailments, without repairing the breach which prodigality has made, discredit the husband, and bring the reproach of meanness on the wife. Retrenchments to be efficient must be applied to great objects. The true economist will draw in by contracting the outline, by narrowing the bottom, by cutting off with an unsparing hand costly superfluities, which affect not comfort but cherish vanity."

"'Retrench the lazy vermin of thine hall,' was the wise counsel of the prudent Venetian, to his thoughtless son-in-law,"

 said

said Sir John, "and its wisdom consisted in its striking at one of the most ruinous and prevailing domestic evils, an overloaded establishment."

If Miss Sparkes had been so long without speaking, it was evident by her manner and turn of countenance, that contempt had kept her silent, and that she thought the topic under discussion as unworthy of the support of the gentlemen as of her own opposition.

"A discreet woman," said Mr. Stanley, "adjusts her expences to her revenues. Every thing knows its time, and every person his place. She will live within her income be it large or small; if large, she will not be luxurious, if small she will not be mean.—Proportion and propriety are among the best secrets of domestic wisdom; and there is no surer test of integrity and judgment, than a well proportioned expenditure.

"Now the point to which I would bring all this verbiage," continued he, "is this,

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—will a lady of a mean understanding, or a vulgar education, be likely to practise economy on this large scale? And is not such economy a field in which a woman of the best sense may honourably exercise her powers?"

Miss Sparkes, who was always a staunch opposer in moral as well as in political debate, because she said it was the best side for the exertion of wit and talents, comforted herself that though she feels herself completely in the minority, yet she always thought that was rather a proof of being right than the contrary; for if it be true, that the generality are either weak or wicked, it follows that the inferior number is most likely to be neither.

"Women," said Mr. Carlton, "in their course of action describe a smaller circle than men: but the perfection of a circle consists not in its dimension but in its correctness. There may be," added he, carefully turning away his eyes from Miss Sparkes, "here and there a soaring female, who looks down with disdain on the paltry

affairs of 'this dim speck called earth,' who despises order and regularity as indications of a groveling spirit. But a sound mind judges directly contrary. The larger the capacity, the wider is the sweep of duties it takes in. A sensible woman loves to imitate that order which is stamped on the whole creation of God. All the operations of nature are uniform even in their changes, and regular in their infinite variety. Nay, the great Author of Nature himself disdains not to be called the God of order."

"I agree with you," said Sir John, "A philosophical lady may 'read Mallebranche, Boyle, and Locke:' she may boast of her intellectual superiority; she may talk of abstract and concrete; of substantial forms and essences; complex ideas and mixed modes, of identity and relation; she may decorate all the logic of one sex with all the rhetoric of the other; yet if her affairs are *delabrés*, if her house is disorderly, her servants irregular, her children neglected, and her table ill arranged, she will

will indicate the want of the most valuable faculty of the human mind, a sound judgment."

"It must, however, be confessed," replied Mr. Stanley, "that such instances are so rare, that the exceptions barely serve to establish the rule. I have known twenty women mismanage their affairs, through a bad education, through ignorance, especially of arithmetic, that grand deficiency in the education of women, through a multiplicity of vain accomplishments, through an excess of dissipation, through a devotedness to personal embellishments, through an absorption of the whole soul in music, for one who has made her husband metaphysically miserable."

"What marks the distinction," said Mr. Carlton, "between the judicious and the vulgar economist is this, the narrow minded woman succeeds tolerably in the filling up, but never in the outline. She is made up of detail, but destitute of plan. Petty duties demand her whole grasp of mind, and after all the thing is incomplete. There is

so much bustle and evident exertion in all she does! she brings into company a mind so exhausted with her little efforts! so overflowing with a sense of her own merits! looking up to her own performances as the highest possible elevation of the human intellect, and looking down on the attainments of more highly gifted women, as so many obstructions to their usefulness; always drawing comparisons to her own advantage, with the cultivated and the refined, and concluding that because she possesses not their elegance they must necessarily be deficient in her art. While economists of a higher strain, I draw from living and not absent instances," added he, looking benignantly round him, "execute their well ordered plan, as an indispensable duty, but not as a superlative merit. They have too much sense to omit it, but they have too much taste to talk of it. It is their business, not their boast. The effect is produced, but the hand which accomplishes it

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is not seen. The mechanism is set at work, but it is behind the scenes. The beauty is visible, the labour is kept out of sight."

"The misfortune is," said Mr. Stanley, "that people are apt to fancy, that judgment is a faculty only to be exercised on great occasions; whereas it is one that every hour is calling into exercise. There are certain habits which though they appear inconsiderable when examined individually, are yet of no small importance in the aggregate. Exactness, punctuality, and the other minor virtues, contribute more than many are aware, to promote and to facilitate the exercise of the higher qualities. I would not erect them into a magnitude beyond their real size; as persons are too apt to do who are *only* punctual, and are deficient in the higher qualities; but by the regular establishment of these habits in a family, it is inconceivable to those who have not made the experiment, how it saves, how it amplifies time, that canvass upon which all the

virtues must be wrought. It is incredible how an orderly division of the day gives apparent rapidity to the wings of time, while a stated devotion of the hour to its employment really lengthens life. It lengthens it by the traces which solid occupation leaves behind it: while it prevents tediousness by affording, with the successive change, the charm of novelty, and keeping up an interest which would flag, if any one employment were too long pursued. Now all these arrangements of life, these divisions of time, and these selections and appropriations of the business to the hour, come within the department of the lady. And how much will the cares of a man of sense be relieved, if he chuse a wife who can do all this for him!"

"In how many of my friend's houses," said Mr. Carlton, "have I observed the contrary habits produce contrary effects! A young lady bred in total ignorance of family management, transplanted from the house of her father, where she has learnt nothing, to that of her husband, where she is expected to

to know every thing, disappoints a prudent man: his affection may continue, but his esteem will be diminished; and with his happiness, his attachment to home will be proportionably lessened."

"It is perfectly just," said Sir John, "and this comfortless deficiency has naturally taught men to inveigh against that higher kind of knowlege which they suppose, though unjustly, to be the cause of ignorance in domestic matters. It is not entirely to gratify the animal, as Miss Sparkes supposes, that a gentleman likes to have his table well appointed; but because his own dignity and his wife's credit are involved in it. The want of this skill is one of the grand evils of modern life. *From the heiress of the man of rank, to the daughter of the opulent tradesman, there is no one quality in which young women are so generally deficient as in domestic economy.* And when I hear learning contended for on one hand, and modish accomplishments on the other, I always contend for this intermediate, this valuable,

valuable, this neglected quality, so little insisted on, so rarely found, and so indispensably necessary."

"Besides," said Mr. Carlton, addressing himself to Miss Sparkes, "you ladies are apt to consider versatility as a mark of genius. She, therefore, who can do a great thing well, ought to do a small one better; for, as Lord Bacon well observes, he who cannot contract his mind as well as dilate it, wants one great talent in life."

Miss Sparkes, condescending at length to break a silence which she had maintained with evident uneasiness, said, "All these plodding employments cramp the genius, degrade the intellect, depress the spirits, debase the taste, and clip the wings of imagination.—And this poor, cramped, degraded, stinted, depressed, debased creature is the very being whom men, men of reputed sense too, commonly prefer to the mind of large dimensions, soaring fancy, and aspiring tastes."

"Imagination," replied Mr. Stanley, "well

"well directed, is the charm of life; it gilds every object, and embellishes every scene; but allow me to say, that where a woman abandons herself to the dominion of this vagrant faculty, it may lead to something worse than a disorderly table; and the husband may find that the badness of his dinner is not the only consequence of her superlunary vagaries."

"True enough," said Mr. Flam, who had never been known to be so silent, or so attentive; "true enough, I have not heard so much sense for a long time. I am sure 'tis sense, because 'tis exactly my own way of thinking. There is my Bell now. I have spent seven hundred pounds, and more money, for her to learn music and whim-whams, which all put together are not worth sixpence. I would give them all up to see her make such a tansy-pudding, as that which the widow in the Spectator helped Sir Roger to at dinner: why I don't believe, Bell knows whether pie-crust is made with butter or cheese; or whether a venison pasty should be baked

baked or boiled. I can tell her, that when her husband, if she ever gets one, comes in sharp set from hunting, he won't like to be put off with a tune, instead of a dinner. To marry a singing girl, and complain she does not keep you a good table, is like eating nightingales, and finding fault that they are not well tasted. They sing, but they are of no further use—to *eat* them, instead of listening to them, is applying to one sense, the gratification which belongs to another."

In the course of conversation, Miss Sparkes a little shocked the delicate feelings of the ladies, of Lucilla especially, by throwing out some expressions of envy, at the superior advantages which men possess for distinguishing themselves. "Women," she said, "with talents not inferior, were allowed no stage for display, while men had such a reach for their exertions, such a compass for exercising their genius, such a range for obtaining distinction, that they were at once the objects of her envy for the means they possessed, and of her

pity

pity for turning them to no better account. There were indeed," she added, "a few men who redeemed the credit of the rest, and for their sakes she gloried, since she could not be of their sex, that she was at least of their species."

"I know, Madam," said Mr. Stanley, "your admiration of heroic qualities and manly virtues—courage for instance. But there are still nobler ways of exercising courage than even in the field of battle. There are more exalted means of shewing spirit than by sending or accepting a challenge. To sustain a fit of sickness may exhibit as true heroism as to lead an army. To bear a deep affliction well calls for as high exertion of soul as to storm a town; and to meet death with Christian resolution is an act of courage, in which many a woman has triumphed, and many a philosopher, and even some generals, have failed."

I thought I saw in Miss Sparkes's countenance a kind of civil contempt, as if she would be glad to exchange the patient sick-

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ness and heroic death-bed for the renown of victory and the glory of battle: and I suspected that she envied the fame of the challenge, and the spirit of the duel, more han those meek and passive virtues which we all agreed were peculiarly Christian and peculiarly feminine.

CHAP. XXXVII.

In the afternoon, when the company were assembled in the drawing-room, the conversation turned on various subjects. Mr. Flam, feeling as if he had not sufficiently produced himself at dinner, now took the lead. He was never solicitous to shew what he called his learning, but when Miss Sparkes was present, whom it was his grand delight to *set down* as he called it. Then he never failed to give broad hints that if he was now no great student, it was not from ignorance, but from the pressure of more indispensable avocations.

He first rambled into some desultory remarks on the absurdity of the world, and the preposterousness of modern usages, which preverted the ends of education, and exalted things which were of least use into most importance.

"You

"You seem out of humour with the world, Mr. Flam," said Mr. Stanley. "I hate the world," returned he. "It is indeed," replied Mr. Stanley, "a scene of much danger, because of much evil."

"I don't value the danger a straw," rejoined Mr. Flam; "and as to the evil, I hope I have sense enough to avoid that: but I hate it for its folly, and despise it for its inconsistency."

"In what particulars, Mr. Flam?" said Sir John Belfield.

"In every thing," replied he. "In the first place, don't people educate their daughters entirely for holidays, and then wonder that they are of no use? Don't they charge them to be modest, and then teach them every thing that can make them bold? Are we not angry that they don't attend to great concerns, after having instructed them to take the most pains for the least things? There is my Fan now, —they tell me she can dance as well as a posture mistress, but she slouches in her walk like a milkmaid. Now as she seldom

dom dances, and is always walking, would it not be more rational to teach her to do that best which she is to do oftenest? She sings like a Syren, but 'tis only to strangers. I, who paid for it, never hear her voice. She is always warbling in a distant room, or in every room where there is company; but if I have the gout and want to be amused, she is dumb as a dormouse."

"So much for the errors in educating our daughters," said Sir John, "now for the sons."

"As to our boys," returned Mr. Flam, "don't we educate them in one religion, and then expect them to practise another. Don't we cram them with books of heathen philosophy, and then bid them go and be good christians? Don't we teach them to admire the heroes and gods of the old poets, when there is hardly one hero, and certainly not one God, who would not in this country have been tried at the Old Bailey, if not executed at Tyburn? And as to the goddesses, if they had been

brought

brought before us on the bench, brother Stanley, there is scarcely one of them but we should have ordered to the house of correction. The queen of them, indeed, I should have sent to the ducking stool for a scold.

"Then again don't we tell our sons when men, that they must admire a monarchial government, after every pains have been taken when they were boys, to fill them with raptures for the ancient republics?"

"Surely, Mr. Flam," said Sir John, "the ancient forms of government may be studied with advantage, were it only to shew us by contrast the superior excellence of our own."

"We might," said Miss Sparkes, in a supercilious accent, "learn some things from them which we much want. You have been speaking of economy. These republicans, whom Mr. Flam is pleased to treat with so much contempt, he must allow, had some good, clever contrivances to keep down the taxes, which it would do us

no

no harm to imitate. Victories were much better bargains to them than they are to us. A few laurel-leaves or a sprig of oak was not quite so dear as a pension."

"But you will allow, Madam," said Sir John, smiling, "that a triumph was a more expensive reward than a title?"

Before she had time to answer, Mr. Flam said; "let me tell you, Miss Sparkes, that as to triumphs, our heroes are so used to them at sea, that they would laugh at them at home. Those who obtain triumphs as often as they meet their enemies, would despise such holiday play among their friends. We don't to be sure reward them as your ancients did. We don't banish them nor put them to death for saving their country like your Athenians. We don't pay them with a trumpery wreath like your Romans. We English don't put our conquerors off with leaves; we give them fruits, as cheerfully bestowed as they are fairly earned. God bless them! I would reduce my table to one dish, my hall to one servant, my stable to one saddle horse, and

my

my kennel to one pointer, rather than abridge the preservers of Old England of a feather."

"Signal exploits, if nationally beneficial," said Sir John, "deserve substantial remuneration; and I am inclined to think that public honours are valuable, not only as rewards but incitements. They are as politic as they are just. When Miltiades and his illustrious ten thousand gained their immortal victory, would not a Blenheim erected on the plains of Marathon, have stimulated unborn soldiers, more than the little transitory columns which barely recorded the names of the victors?"

"What warrior," said Mr. Carlton, "will hereafter visit the future Palace of Trafalgar without reverence? A reverence, the purity of which will be in no degree impaired by contemplating such an additional motive to emulation."

In answer to some further observations of Miss Sparkes, on the superiority of the ancient to British patriotism, Mr. Flam, whose indignation now provoked him to display

display his whole stock of erudition, eagerly exclaimed—"Do you call that patriotism in your favourite Athenians, to be so fond of raree-shows, as not only to devote the money of the state to the play-house, but to make it capital to divert a little of it to the wants of the gallant soldiers, who were fighting their battles? I hate to hear these fellows called patriots, who preferred their diversions to their country.

Then erecting himself as if he felt the taller for being an Englishman, he added, —"What, Madam Sparkes, would your Greeks have said to a PATRIOTIC FUND by private contribution, of near half a million, in the midst of heavy taxes and a tedious war, voluntarily raised and cheerfully given to the orphans, widows, and mothers of their brave countrymen, who fell in their defence? Were the poor soldiers who fought under your Cimons, and your ——, I forget their names, ever so kindly remembered? Make it out that they were—

 shew

shew me such a spirit among your ancients, and I'll turn republican to-morrow."

Miss Sparkes having again said something which he thought tended to exalt the ancient states at the expence of our own country, Mr. Flam indignantly replied—"Tell me, Madam, did your Athens, or your Sparta, or your Rome, ever take in seven thousand starving priests, driven from a country with which they were at war; a country they had reason to hate, of a religion they detested? Did they ever receive them I say, maintain them like gentlemen, and caress them like friends? If you can bring me one such instance, I will give up Old England, and turn Greek, or Roman, or—any thing but Frenchman."

"I should be inclined," said Mr. Stanley, "to set down that noble deed to the account of our national religion, as well as of our national generosity."

Miss Sparkes said, "In one respect, however, Mr. Flam imitates the French

whom he is abusing. He is very apt to triumph where he has gained no victory. If you hear his account of a defeat, you would take it like theirs, for a conquest." She added, however, that there were illustrious men in other countries besides our own, as their successes testified. For her part, she was a citizen of the world, and honoured heroes wherever they were found; in Macedon, in Sweden, or even in France.

"True enough," rejoined Mr. Flam; "the rulers of other countries have gone about and delivered kingdoms, as we are doing; but there is this difference: they freed them from mild masters to make them their own slaves; we neither get them for ourselves or our minions, our brothers or cousins, our Jeromes or Josephs. *We raise* the weak, *they* pull down the prosperous. If *we* redeem kingdoms 'tis to bestow them on their own lawful kings. If we help this nation, 'tis to recal one sovereign from banishment; if we assist that, 'tis to deliver another from captivity."

 "What

"What a scene for Spain," said Sir John, "to behold in us their own national Quixotism soberly exemplified and rationally realized! The generous theory of their romantic knight-errant brought into actual practice! The fervour without the absurdity; the sound principle of justice without the extravagance of fancy! Wrongs redressed and rights restored, and upon the grandest scale! Deliverance wrought, not for imaginary princesses, but for deposed and imprisoned monarchs! Injuries avenged—not the ideal injuries of ridiculous individuals, but the substantial wrongs of plundered empires!"

Sir John, who was amused with the oddities of Mr. Flam, was desirous of still provoking him to talk; much effort indeed was not required to induce him to do what he was fond of doing, whenever there was an opportunity of contradicting Miss Sparkes.

"But, Mr. Flam," said Sir John, "you were interrupted as you began to enumerate the inconsistencies which you said had put you out of love with the world."

"Why,

"Why, it makes me mad," replied he, "to hear men who make the loudest outcry about the dangers of the state, cramming the houses with French governesses, French cooks, and French valets; is not this adding flame to the fire? Then I have no patience to see people who pretend great zeal for the church, delighted that an Italian singer should have a larger revenue than the highest of our own bishops. Such patriots might have done well enough for the Athenians," added he, looking insultingly at Miss Sparkes, "but they make miserable Englishmen." Then I hate to see fellows who pay least taxes, complaining most of the burthen,—those who most lament the hardness of the times, spending money in needless extravagance, and luxury increasing in exact proportion as means diminish.

"Then I am sick of the conceit of the boys and girls. Do but observe how their vanity imposes on their understanding, and how names disguise things. My son would

start if I were to desire him to go to London in the *stage coach*, but he *puts himself into the mail* with great coolness. If I were to talk to Fan about living in a *small house*, she would not give me the hearing, whereas she is quite wild to live in a *cottage*."

"I do not quite agree with you, Mr. Flam," said Sir John, smiling, "as to the inconsistency of the world, I rather lament its dull uniformity. If we may rely on those living chronicles, the newspapers, all is one faultless scene of monotonous perfection. Were it otherwise, I presume, those frugal philosophers would not keep a set of phrases ready cut and dried, in order to apply them universally in all cases. For instance, is not every public place from St. James's to Otaheite, or the Cape, invariably *crowded with beauty and fashion?* Is not every public sermon pronounced to be *excellent?* Is not every civic speech, every provincial harangue *neat and appropriate?* And is not every military corps, from the veteran

veteran regiment of regulars to the volunteer company of a month's standing, always declared to be *in the highest state of discipline?"*

Before the company went away I observed that Mrs. Carlton gave Lucilla a significant glance, and both withdrew together. In spite of my thorough belief of the injustice and absurdity of my suspicion, a pang darted through my heart, at the bare possibility that Lord Staunton might be the subject of this secret conference. I was perfectly assured, that Miss Stanley would never accept him, while he retained his present character, but that character might be improved. She had rejected him for his principles; if these principles were changed, there was no other reasonable ground of objection. He might be reformed. Dare I own, even to myself, that I dreaded to hear of his reformation. I hated myself for the thought. I will, said I, faintly, endeavour to rejoice if it be so. I felt a conflict in my mind between my principles and my passion,

sion, that distressed me not a little. My integrity had never before been so assailed.

At length they returned. I earnestly examined their countenance. Both looked cheerful, and even animated; yet it was evident from the redness of their eyes that both had been weeping. The company immediately took their leave; all our party, as it was a fine evening, attended them out to their carriages, except Miss Stanley; she only pressed the hand of Mrs. Carlton, smiled, and looking as if she durst not trust herself to talk to her, withdrew to the bow window from whence she could see them depart. I remained in the room.

As she was wiping her eyes to take away the redness, which was a sure way to encrease it, I ventured to join her, and enquired, with an interest which I could not conceal, what had happened to distress her.

"These are not tears of distress," said she, sweetly smiling. "I am quite ashamed that I have so little self-controul; but Mrs.

Carlton

Carlton has given me so much pleasure! I have caught the infection of her joy, though my foolish sympathy looks more like sorrow." Surely, said I, indignantly to myself, she will not own Staunton's love to my face!

All frank and open as Miss Stanley was, I was afraid to press her. I had not courage to ask what I longed to know. Though Lord Staunton's renewed addresses might not give them so much pleasure, yet his reformation I knew would. I now looked so earnestly inquisitive at Lucilla, that she said, "Oh, he is all we could wish. He is a thoroughly converted man!" Indignation and astonishment made me speechless. Is this the modest Lucilla, said I to myself? It is all over. She loves him to distraction. As I attempted not to speak, she at length said, "My poor friend is at last quite happy. I know you will rejoice with us. Mr. Carlton has for some time regularly read the Bible with her. He condescends to hear, and to invite her remarks, telling her that if he is the better classic, she is the

better Christian, and that their assistance in the things which each understands must be reciprocal. If he is her teacher in human literature, he says, she must be his in that which is divine. He has been very earnest to get his mind imbued with scriptural knowlege." How inexpressible was now my joy! As I was still silent she went on. "But this is not all.

"Last Saturday he said to her, 'Henrietta, I have but one complaint to make of you; and it is for a fault which I always thought would be the last I should ever have to charge you with. It is selfishness.' Mrs. Carlton was a little shocked, though the tenderness of his manner mitigated her alarm. 'Henrietta,' resumed he 'you intend to go to Heaven without your husband. I know you always retire to your dressing-room, not only for your private devotions, but to read prayers to your maids. What have your men servants' done, what has your husband done, that they should be excluded? Is it not a little selfish, my Henrietta,' added he, smiling, 'to

confine

confine your zeal to the eternal happiness of your own sex? Will you allow me and our men servants to join you? To-morrow is Sunday; we will then, if you please, begin in the hall. You shall prepare what you would have read; and I will be your chaplain. A most unworthy one, Henrietta, I confess; but you will not only have a chaplain of your own making, but a Christian also. Yes my angelic wife, I am a Christian upon the truest, the deepest conviction.'

"'Never, my dear Lucilla,' continued Mrs Carlton, 'did I know what true happiness was till that moment. My husband, with all his faults, had always been very sincere. Indeed his aversion from hypocrisy had made him keep back his right feelings and sentiments, till he was assured they were well established in his mind. He has for some time been regular at church, a thing, he said, too much taken up as a customary form to be remarkable, and which therefore involved not much; but family prayer, adopted from convic-

tion of its being a duty, rather pledged a man to consistent religion. Never, I hope shall I forget the joy I felt, nor my gratitude to that Being 'from whom all holy desires proceed,' when, with all his family kneeling solemnly around him, I heard my once unhappy husband with a sober fervour begin,

"'To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws which he set before us.'

"'He evidently struggled with his own feelings; but his manly mind carried him through it with an admirable mixture of dignity and feeling. He was so serenely cheerful the rest of the evening, that I felt he had obtained a great victory over himself, and his heart was at peace within him. Prayer with him was not a beginning form, but a consummation of his better purposes.'"

The sweet girl could not forbear weeping again, while she was giving me this interesting account. I felt as if I had never loved

her till then. To see her so full of sensibility, without the slighest tincture of romance, so feeling, yet so sober minded, enchanted me. I could now afford to wish heartily for Lord Staunton's reformation, because it was not likely to interfere with my hopes. And, now the danger was over, I even endeavoured to make myself believe that I *should* have wished it in any event; so treacherous will the human heart be found by those who watch its motions. And it proceeds from not watching them, that the generality are so little acquainted with the evils which lurk within it.

Before I had time to express half what I felt to the fair narrator, the party came in. They seemed as much puzzld at the position in which they found Lucilla and myself, she wiping her eyes, and I standing by in admiration, as I had been at her mysterious interview with Mrs. Carlton. The Belfields knew not what to make of it. The mother's looks expressed astonishment and anxiety. The father's eye demanded an explanation. All this mute eloquence passed

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in an instant. Miss Stanley gave them not time to enquire. She flew to her mother, and eagerly repeated the little tale which furnished matter for grateful joy and improving conversation the rest of the evening.

Mr. Stanley expressed a thorough confidence in the sincerity of Carlton. "He had always," continued he, "in his worst days, an abhorrence of deceit, and such a dread of people appearing better than they are, that he even commended that most absurd practice of Dean Swift, who, you know, used to perform family prayer in a garret, for fear any one should call in and detect him in the performance." Carlton defended this as an honourable instance of Swift's abhorrence of ostentation in his religion. I opposed it on the more probable ground of his being ashamed of it. For allowing, what however never can be allowed, that an ordinary man might have some excuse for the dread of being sneered at, as wanting to be thought righteous overmuch; yet in a Churchman, in a dignified Churchman,

 family

family prayer would be expected as a customary decency, and indispensible appendage to his situation; which, though it might be practised without piety, could not be omitted without disgrace, and which even a sensible infidel, considering it merely as a professional act, could not say was a custom

More honour'd in the breach than the observance.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

ONE evening, which Mr. Tyrrel happened to spend with us, after Mr. Stanley had performed the family devotions, Mr. Tyrrel said to him, "Stanley, I don't much like the prayer you read. It seems by the great stress it lays on holiness, to imply that a man has something in his own power. You did indeed mention the necessity of faith, and the power of grace; but there was too much about making the life holy, as if that were all in all. You seem to be putting us so much upon working and doing, that you leave nothing to do for the Saviour."

"I wish," replied Mr. Stanley, "as I am no deep theologian, that you had started this objection before Dr. Barlow went away; for I know no man more able or more willing for serious discussion.'

"No,"

"No," replied Tyrrel, "I see clearly by some things which he dropped in conversation, as well as by the whole tenor of his sermons, that Barlow and I should never agree. He means well, but knows little. He sees something, but feels nothing. More argument than unction. Too much reasoning, and too little religion; a little light, and no heat. He seems to me so to 'overload the ship with duties,' that it will sink by the very means he takes to keep it afloat. I thank God my own eyes are opened, and I at last feel comfortable in my mind."

"Religious comfort," said Mr. Stanley, "is a high attainment. Only it is incumbent on every Christian to be assured, that if he is happy it is on safe grounds."

"I have taken care of that," replied Mr. Tyrrel. "For some years after I had quitted my loose habits, I attended occasionally at church, but found no comfort in it, because I perceived so much was to be *done*, and so much was to be *sacrificed*. But

But the great doctrines of faith, as opened to me by Mr. *H—n*, have at last given me peace and liberty, and I rest myself without solicitude on the mercy so freely offered in the Gospel. No mistakes or sins of mine can ever make me forfeit the divine favour."

"Let us, hear, however," replied Mr. Stanley, "what the Bible says; for as that is the only rule by which we shall be judged hereafter, it may be prudent to be guided by it here. God says by the prophet, 'I will put my spirit within you:' but he does this for some purpose; for he says, in the very next words, 'I will cause you to *walk* in my statutes.' And for fear this should not plainly enough inculcate holiness, he goes on to say, 'And ye shall *keep* my judgements, and *do* them. Shew me, if you can, a single promise made to an impenitent unholy man."

Tyrrel. "Why, is not the mercy of God promised to the wicked in every part of the Bible?

Stanley.

Stanley. "It is. But that is, 'If he forsake his way."

Tyrrel. "This fondness for work is, in my opinion, nothing else but setting aside the free grace of God."

Stanley. "Quite the contrary: so far from setting it aside, it is the way to glorify it, for it is by that grace alone that we are enabled to perform right actions. For myself I always find it difficult to answer persons, who, in flying to one extreme, think they cannot too much degrade the opposite. If we give faith its due prominence, the mere moralist reprobates our principles, as if we were depreciating works. If we magnify the beauty of holiness, the advocate for exclusive faith accuses us of being its enemy."

Tyrrel. "For my own part, I am persuaded that unqualified trust is the only ground of safety."

Stanley. "He who cannot lie has indeed told us so. But trust in God is humble dependence, not presumptuous security. The Bible does not say, trust in the Lord and sin

on,

on, 'but, trust in the Lord, and be doing good.' We are elsewhere told, that 'God works in us to will and to do.' There is no getting over that little word *to do.* I suppose you allow the necessity of prayer."

Tyrrel. Certainly I do."

Stanley. "But there are conditions to our prayers also; 'if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.'"

Tyrrel. "The scriptures affirm that we must live on the promises."

Stanley. "They are indeed the very aliment of the Christian life. But what are the promises?

Tyrrel. "Free pardon and eternal life to them that are in Christ Jesus."

Stanley. "True. But who are they that are in Christ Jesus? The Apostle tells us, 'they who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.' Besides, is not holiness promised as well as pardon? 'A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.'"

Tyrrel. "Surely, Stanley, you abuse the

the grace of the Gospel, by pretending that man is saved by his own righteousness."

Stanley. "No, no, my dear Tyrrel, it is you who abuse it, by making God's mercy set aside man's duty. Allow me to observe, that he who exalts the grace of God with a view to indulge himself in any sin, is deceiving no one but himself; and he who trusts in Christ, with a view to spare himself the necessity of watchfulness, humility, and self-denial, that man depends upon Christ for more than he has promised."

Tyrrel. "Well, Mr. Stanley, it appears to me that you want to patch up a convenient accommodating religion, as if Christ were to do a little, and we were to do the rest: a sort of partnership salvation, and in which man has the largest share."

Stanley. "This, I fear, is indeed the dangerous creed of many worldly Christians. No; God may be said to do all, because he gives power for all, strength for all, grace for all. But this grace is a principle, a vital energy, a life-giving spirit to quicken us, to make

make us abound in holiness. He does not make his grace abound, that we may securely live in sin, but that we may subdue it, renounce it, live above it."

Tyrrel. "When our Saviour was upon earth, there was no one quality he so uniformly commended in those who came to be healed by him, as faith."

Stanley. "It is most true. But we do not meet in any of them with such a presumptuous faith, as led them to rush into diseases on purpose to shew their confidence in his power of healing them, neither are we to 'continue in sin that grace may abound.' You cannot but observe, that the faith of the persons you mention, was always accompanied with an earnest desire to get rid of their diseases. And it is worth remarking, that to the words, 'thy faith has made thee whole,' is added '*sin no more*,' lest a worse thing come unto thee."

Tyrrel. "You cannot persuade me that any neglect, or even sin of mine, can make void the covenant of God."

Stanley.

Stanley. "Nothing can set aside the covenant of God, which is sure and stedfast. But as for him who lives in the allowed practice of any sin, it is clear that he has no part nor lot in the matter. It is clear that he is not one of those whom God has taken into the covenant. That God will keep his word is most certain, but such a one does not appear to be the person to whom that word is addressed. God as much designed that you should apply the faculties, the power, and the will he has given you, to a life of holiness, as he meant, when he gave you legs, hands, and eyes, that you should walk, work, and see. His grace is not intended to exclude the use of his gifts, but to perfect, exalt, and ennoble them."

Tyrrel. "I can produce a multitude of texts to prove that Christ has done every thing, and of course has left nothing for me to do, but to believe on him."

Stanley. "Let us take the general tenor and spirit of scripture, and neither pack single texts together, detached from the con-

connexion in which they stand, nor be so unreasonable as to squeeze all the doctrines of Christianity out of every single text, which perhaps was only meant to inculcate one individual principle. How consistently are the great leading doctrines of faith and holiness balanced, and reconciled in every part of the Bible! If ever I have been in danger of resting on a mere dead faith, by one of those texts on which you exclusively build; in the very next sentence, perhaps, I am roused to active virtue by some lively example or absolute command. If again I am ever in danger, as you say, of sinking the ship with my proud duties, the next passage calls me to order, by some powerful injunction to renounce all confidence in my miserably defective virtues, and to put my whole trust in Christ. By thus assimilating the Creed with the Commandments, the Bible becomes its own interpreter, and perfect harmony is the result. Allow me also to remark, that this invariable rule of exhibiting the doctrines of Scripture in their due proportion,

portion, order and relative connexion is one of the leading excellencies in the service of our Church. While no doctrine is neglected or undervalued, none is disproportionably magnified, at the expence of the others. There is neither omission, undue prominence, nor exaggeration. There is complete symmetry and correct proportion."

Tyrrel. "I assert that we are freed by the Gospel from the condemnation of the law."

Stanley. "But where do you find that we are free from the obligation of obeying it? For my own part I do not combine the doctrine of grace, to which I most cordially assent, with any doctrine which practically denies the voluntary agency of man. Nor, in my adoption of the belief of that voluntary agency, do I, in the remotest degree, presume to abridge the sovereignty of God. I adopt none of the metaphysical subtilties, none of the abstruse niceties of any party, nor do I imitate either in the reprobation of the other, firmly believing that heaven is

peopled

peopled with the humble and the conscientious out of every class of real Christians."

Tyrrel. "Still I insist that if Christ has delivered me from sin, sin can do me no harm."

Stanley. "My dear Mr. Tyrrel, if the king of your country were a mighty general, and had delivered the land from some powerful enemy, would it shew your sense of the obligation, or your allegiance as a subject, if you were to join the enemy he had defeated? By so doing, though the country might be saved, you would ruin yourself. Let us not then live in confederacy with sin, the power of which indeed our Redeemer has broken, but both the power and guilt of which the individual is still at liberty to incur."

Tyrrel. "Stanley, I remember when you thought the Gospel was all in all."

Stanley. "I think so still; but I am now as I was then, for a sober consistent Gospel, a Christianity which must evidence itself by its fruits. The first words of the apostle after his conversion were, 'Lord what wilt thou

thou have me to *do?*' When he says, 'so run that ye may obtain,' he could never mean that we could obtain by sitting still nor would he have talked of 'labouring *in vain*,' if he meant that we should not labour at all. We dare not persist in any thing that is wrong, or neglect any thing that is right, from an erroneous notion, that we have such an interest in Christ, as will excuse us from doing the one, or persisting in the other."

Tyrrel. "I fancy you think that a man's salvation depends on the number of good actions he can muster together."

Stanley. "No, it is the very spirit of Christianity not to build on this or that actual work, but sedulously to strive for that temper and those dispositions which are the seminal principle of all virtues; and where the heart struggles, and prays for the attainment of this state, though the man should be placed in such circumstances as to be able to do little to promote the welfare of mankind, or the glory of God, in

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the eyes of the world; this very habitual aim and bent of the mind, with humble sorrow at its low attainments, is, in my opinion, no slight degree of obedience."

Tyrrel. "But you will allow that the scriptures affirm that Christ is not only a sacrifice, but a refuge, a consolation, a rest."

Stanley. "Blessed be God, he is indeed all these. But he is a consolation only to the heavy laden, a refuge to those alone who forsake sin. The rest he promises, is not a rest from labour but from evil. It is a rest from the drudgery of the world, but not from the service of God. It is not inactivity, but quietness of spirit; not sloth, but peace. He draws men indeed from slavery to freedom, but not a freedom to do evil, or to do nothing. He makes his service easy, but not by lowering the rule of duty, not by adapting his commands to the corrupt inclinations of our nature. He communicates his grace, gives fresh and higher motives to obedience; and imparts peace and comfort, not by any abatement

in

in his demands, but by this infusion of his own grace, and this communication of his own spirit."

Tyrrel. "You are a strange fellow. According to you, we can neither be saved by good works, nor without them."

Stanley. "Come, Mr. Tyrrel, you are nearer the truth than you intended. We cannot be saved by the merit of our good works, without setting at nought the merits and death of Christ; and we cannot be saved without them unless we set at nought God's holiness, and make him a favourer of sin. Now to this the doctrine of the atonement, properly understood, is most completely hostile. That this doctrine *favours* sin, is one of the false charges which worldly men bring against vital Christianity, because they do not understand the principle, nor enquire into the grounds, on which it is adopted."

Tyrrel. "Still I think you limit the grace of God, as if people must be very good first, in order to deserve it, and then he will come and add his grace to their

good-

goodness. Whereas grace has been most conspicuous in the most notorious sinners."

Stanley. "I allow that the grace of God has never manifested itself more gloriously than in the conversion of notorious sinners. But it is worth remarking, that all such, with St. Paul at their head, have ever after been eminently more afraid than other men of falling again into sin; they have prayed with the greatest earnestness to be delivered from the power of it, and have continued to lament most deeply the remaining corruption of their hearts."

In the course of the conversation Mr. Tyrrel said, "he should be inclined to entertain doubts of that man's state who could not give an accurate account of the time and the manner in which he was first awakened, and who had no sensible manifestations of the divine favour."

"I believe," replied Mr. Stanley, "that my notions of the evidence of being in the favour of God differ materially from yours.

If

If a man feel in himself a hatred of all sin, without sparing his favourite corruption; if he rest for salvation on the promises of the Gospel alone; if he maintain in his mind such a sense of the nearness and immeasurable importance of eternal things, as shall enable him to use temporal things with moderation, and anticipate their end without dismay; if he delight in the worship of God, is zealous for his service, making *his* glory the end and aim of all his actions; if he labour to fulfil his allotted duties conscientiously; if he love his fellow creatures as the children of the same common father, and partakers of the same common hope; if he feel the same compassion for the immortal interests as for the worldly distresses of the unfortunate; forgiving others as he hopes to be forgiven; if he endeavours, according to his measure and ability, to diminish the vice and misery with which the world abounds, *that* man has a solid ground of peace and hope, though he may not have those sensible evidences which afford triumph and exultation. In

the mean while the man of a heated imagination, who boasts of mysterious communications within, is perhaps exhibiting outwardly, unfavourable marks of his real state, and holding out, by his low practice, discouragements unfriendly to that religion of which he professes himself a shining instance.

"The sober Christian is as fully convinced, that only He who made the heart, can new make it, as the enthusiast. He is as fully persuaded that his natural dispositions cannot be changed, nor his affections purified, but by the agency of the Divine Spirit, as the fanatic. And though he presume not to limit omnipotence to a sudden or a gradual change, yet he does not think it necessary to ascertain the day, and the hour, and the moment, contented to be assured, that whereas he was once blind he now sees. If he do not presume in his own case to fix the *chronology of conversion*, he is not less certain as to its effects. If he cannot enumerate dates, and recapitulate feelings, he can and does produce such

such evidences of his improvement, as virtuous habits, a devout temper, an humble and charitable spirit, 'repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;' and this gives an evidence less equivocal, as existing more in the heart than on the lips, and more in the life, than in the discourse. Surely if a plant be flourishing, the branches green, and the fruit fair and abundant, we may venture to pronounce these to be indications of health and vigour, though we cannot ascertain the moment when the seed was sown, nor the manner in which it sprung up."

Sir John, who had been an attentive listener, but had not yet spoken a word, now said, smiling, "Mr. Stanley, you steer most happily between the two extremes. This exclusive cry of grace in one party of religionists, which drives the opposite side into as unreasonable a clamour against it, reminds me of the Queen of Louis Quatorze. When the Jesuits, who were of the court-party, made so violent an outcry against the Jansenists, for no reason but be-

cause they had more piety than themselves, her Majesty was so fearful of being thought to favour the oppressed side, that in the excess of her party zeal, she vehemently exclaimed, 'Oh, fie upon grace! fie upon grace!'"

Mr. Stanley. "Party violence thinks it can never recede far enough from the side it opposes."

Tyrrel. "But how then is our religion to be known, except by our making a profession of truths, which the irreligious are either ignoaant of, or oppose?"

Stanley. "There is, as I have already observed, a more infallible criterion. It is best known by the effects it produces on the heart and on the temper. A religion, which consists in opinions only, will not advance us in our progress to heaven: it is apt to inflate the mind with the pride of disputation; and victory is so commonly the object of debate, that eternity slides out of sight. The two cardinal points of our religion, justification and sanctification, are, if I may be allowed the term, correla-

tives;

tives; they imply a reciprocal relation, nor do I call that state Christianity, in which either is separately and exclusively maintained. The union of these manifests the dominion of religion in the heart, by increasing its humility, by purifying its affections, by setting it above the contamination of the maxims and habits of the world, by detaching it from the vanities of time, and elevating it to a desire for the riches of eternity."

Tyrrel. "All the exhortations to duties, with which so many sermons abound, are only an infringement on the liberty of a Christian. A true believer knows of no duty but faith, no rule but love.

Stanley. "Love is indeed the fountain and principle of all practical virtue. But love itself requires some regulation to direct its exertions; some law to guide its motions; some rule to prevent its aberrations; some guard to hinder that which is vigorous from becoming eccentric. With such a regulation, such a law, such a guard, the divine ethics of the Gospel have fur-

nished us. The word of God is as much our rule, as his spirit is our guide, or his Son our 'way.' This unerring rule alone secures Christian liberty from disorder, from danger, from irregularity, from excess. Conformity to the precepts of the Redeemer is the most infallible proof of having an interest in his death."

We afterwards insensibly slid into other subjects, when Mr. Tyrrel, like a combatant who thought himself victorious, seemed inclined to return to the charge. The love of money having been mentioned by Sir John with extreme severity, Mr. Tyrrel seemed to consider it as a venial failing, and said that both avarice and charity might be constitutional.

"They may be so," said Mr. Stanley, "but Christianity, sir, has a constitution of its own; a superinduced constitution. A real Christian "confers not with flesh and blood;" with his *constitution*, whether he shall give or forbear to give, when it is a clear duty, and the will of God requires it. If we believe in the principles, we must

adopt the conclusions. Religion is not an unproductive theory, nor charity an unnecessary, an incidental consequence, nor a contingent left to our choice. You are a classic, Mr. Tyrrel, and cannot have forgotten that in your mythological poets, the three Pagan graces were always knit together hand in hand; the three Christian graces are equally inseparable, and the greatest of these is charity; that grand principle of love, of which alms-giving is only one branch."

Mr. Tyrrel endeavoured to evade the subject, and seemed to intimate that true Christianity might be known without any such evidences as Mr. Stanley thought necessary. This led the latter to insist warmly on the vast stress which every part of scripture laid on the duty of charity. "Its doctrines," said he, "its precepts, its promises, and its examples, all inculcate it." "The new commandment" of John—"the pure and undefiled religion" of James—"Ye shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" of Luke—the daily and hourly

hourly practice of Him, who not only taught to do good, but who "went about doing it"—"The store for a good foundation against the time to come" of Paul,—nay in the only full, solemn, and express representation of the last day, which the Gospel exhibits, charity is not only brought forward as a predominant, a distinguishing feature of the righteous, but a specific recompense seems to be assigned to it, when practised on true Christian grounds. And it is not a little observable, that the only posthumous quotation from the sayings of our divine Saviour which the Scripture has recorded, is an encouragement to charity —"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive."

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIX.

THE next afternoon, when we were all conversing together, I asked Mr. Stanley what opinion he held on a subject which had lately been a good deal canvassed—the propriety of young ladies learning the dead languages; particularly Latin. He was silent. Mrs. Stanley smiled. Phœbe laughed outright. Lucilla, who had nearly finished making tea, blushed excessively. Little Celia, who was sitting on my knee while I was teaching her to draw a bird, put an end to the difficulty, by looking up in my face and crying out,—"Why, sir, Lucilla reads Latin with papa every morning." I cast a timid eye on Miss Stanley, who, after putting the sugar into the cream pot, and the tea into the sugar bason, slid out of the room, beckoning Phœbe to follow her.

"Poor

"Poor Lucilla," said Mr. Stanley, "I feel for her! Well, sir," continued he, "you have discovered by your external, what I trust you would not have soon found by internal evidence. Parents who are in high circumstances, yet from principle abridge their daughters of the pleasures of the dissipated part of the world, may surely be allowed to substitute other pleasures; and if the girl has a strong inquisitive mind, they may direct it to such pursuits as call for vigorous application, and the exercise of the mental powers."

"How does that sweet girl manage," said Lady Belfield, "to be so utterly void of pretension? So much softness and so much usefulness strip her of all the terrors of learning."

"At first," replied Mr. Stanley, "I only meant to give Lucilla as much Latin as would teach her to grammaticize her English, but her quickness in acquiring led me on, and I think I did right; for it is superficial knowlege that excites vanity. A learned language, which a discreet woman

man will never produce in company, is less likely to make her vain, than those acquirements which are always in exhibition. And after all, it is a hackneyed remark, that the best instructed girl will have less learning than a school-boy; and why should vanity operate in her case more than in his?"

"For this single reason, sir," said I, "that every boy knows that which very few girls are taught. Suspect me not, however, of censuring a measure which I admire. I hope the example of your daughters will help to raise the tone of female education."

"Softly, softly," interrupted Mr. Stanley, "retrench your plural number. It is only one girl out of six who has deviated from the beaten track. I do not expect many converts, to what I must rather call my practice in one instance, than my general opinion. I am so convinced of the prevailing prejudice, that the thing has never been named out of the family. If my gay neighbour Miss Rattle knew that Lucilla had

learnt

learnt Latin, she would instantly find out a few odd moments to add that language to her innumerable acquirements, because her mother can afford to pay for it, and because Lady Di. Dash has never learnt it. I assure you, however," (laughing as he spoke,) "I never intend to smuggle my poor girl on any man, by concealing from him this unpopular attainment any more than I would conceal any personal defect."

"I will honestly confess," said Sir John, who had not yet spoken, "that had I been to judge the case *à priori*, had I met Miss Stanley under the terrifying persuasion that she was a scholar, I own I should have met her with a prejudice; I should have feared she might be forward in conversation, deficient in feminine manners, and destitute of domestic talents. But having had such a fair occasion of admiring her engaging modesty, her gentle and unassuming tone in society, and above all having heard from Lady Belfield how eminently she excels in the true science of a lady—

domestic

domestic knowlege,—I cannot refuse her that additional regard, which this solid acquirement, so meekly borne, deserves. Nor on reflection, do I see why we should be so forward to instruct a woman in the language spoken at Rome in its present degraded state, in which there are comparatively few authors to improve her, and yet be afraid that she should be acquainted with that which was its vernacular tongue in its age of glory two thousand years ago, and which abounds with writers of supreme excellence."

I was charmed at these concessions from Sir John, and exclaimed, with a transport which I could not restrain, "In our friends, even in our common acquaintance, do we not delight to associate with those whose pursuits have been similar to our own, and who have read the same books? How dull do we find it, when civility compels us to pass even a day with an illiterate man? Shall we not then delight in the kindred acquirements of a dearer friend? Shall we not rejoice in a com-

companion who has drawn, though less copiously perhaps, from the same rich sources with ourselves; who can relish the beauty we quote, and trace the allusion at which we hint? I do not mean that *learning* is absolutely necessary, but a man of taste, who has an ignorant wife, cannot, in her company, think his own thoughts, nor speak his own language; his thoughts he will suppress; his language he will debase—the one from hopelessness, the other from compassion. He must be continually lowering and diluting his meaning, in order to make himself intelligible.

"This he will do for the woman he loves, but in doing it he will not be happy —She who cannot be entertained by his conversation, will not be convinced by his reasoning; and at length he will find out, that it is less trouble to lower his own standard to hers, than to exhaust himself in the vain attempt to raise hers to his own.'

"A fine high-sounding *tirade*, Charles, spoken

spoken *con amore*," said Sir John. "I really believe though that one reason why women are so frivolous, is, that the things they are taught are not solid enough to fix the attention, exercise the intellect, and fortify the understanding. They learn little that inures to reasoning, or compels to patient meditation."

"I consider the difficulties of a solid education, said Mr. Stanley, "as a sort of preliminary course, intended perhaps by Providence as a gradual preparative for the subsequent difficulties of life; as a prelude to the acquisition of that solidity and firmness of character which actual trials are hereafter to confirm. Though I would not make instruction unnecessarily harsh and rugged, yet I would not wish to encrease its facilities to such a degree as to weaken that robustness of mind which it should be its object to promote, in order to render mental discipline subservient to moral."

"How have you managed with your other girls, Stanley," said Sir John; "for though

though you vindicate general knowlege, you profess not to wish for general learning in the sex."

"Far from it," replied Mr. Stanley. "I am a gardener, you know, and accustomed to study the genius of the soil before I plant. Most of my daughters, like the daughters of other men, have some one talent, or at least propensity; for parents are too apt to mistake inclination for genius. This propensity I endeavour to find out, and to cultivate. But, if I find the natural bias very strong, and not very safe, I then labour to counteract, instead of encouraging the tendency, and try to give it a fresh direction. Lucilla having a strong bent to what relates to intellectual taste, I have read over with her the most unexceptionable parts of a few of the best Roman classics. She began at nine years old, for I have remarked, that it is not learning much, but learning late, which makes pedants.

"Phœbe, who has a superabundance of vivacity, I have in some measure tamed,

by making her not only a complete mistress of arithmetic, but by giving her a tincture of mathematics. Nothing puts such a bridle on the fancy as demonstration. A habit of computing steadies the mind, and subdues the soaring of imagination. It sobers the vagaries of trope and figure, substitutes truth for metaphor, and exactness for amplification. This girl, who, if she had been fed on poetry and works of imagination, might have become a Miss Sparkes, now rather gives herself the airs of a calculator and of a grave computist. Though as in the case of the cat in the fable, who was metamorphosed into a lady, nature will break out as soon as the scratching of a mouse is heard; and all Phœbe's philosophy can scarcely keep her in order, if any work of fancy comes in her way.

"To soften the horrors of her fate, however, I allowed her to read a few of the best things in her favourite class. When I read to her the more delicate parts of Gulliver's Travels, with which she was enchant-

ed

ed, she affected to be angry at the voyage to Laputa, because it ridicules philosophical science. And in Brobdignag, she said, the proportions were not correct. I must however explain to you, that the use which I made of these dry studies with Phœbe, was precisely the same which the ingenious Mr. Cheshire makes of his steel machines for defective shapes, to straiten a crooked tendency, or strengthen a weak one. Having employed these means to set her mind upright, and to cure a wrong bias; as that skilful gentleman discards his apparatus as soon as the patient becomes strait, so have I discontinued these pursuits, for I never meant to make a mathematical lady. Jane has a fine ear and a pretty voice, and will sing and play well enough for any girl who is not to make music her profession. One or two of the others sing agreeably.

"The little one who brought the last nosegay has a strong turn for natural history, and we all of us generally botanize a little of an evening, which gives a fresh interest

terest to our walks. She will soon draw plants and flowers pretty accurately.—Louisa has some taste in designing, and takes tolerable sketches from nature. These we encourage, because they are solitary pleasures, and want no witnesses. They all are too eager to impart somewhat of what they know to your little favourite Celia, who is in danger of picking up a little of every thing, the sure way to excel in nothing.

"Thus each girl is furnished with some one source of independent amusement. But what would become of them, or rather what would become of their mother and me, if every one of them was a scholar, a mathematician, a singer, a performer, a botanist, a painter? Did we attempt, to force all these acquirements and a dozen more on every girl, all her *time* would be occupied about things which will be of no value to her in *eternity*. I need not tell you that we are carefully communicating to every one of them

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that general knowlege which should be common to all gentlewomen.

"In unrolling the vast volume of ancient and modern history, I ground on it some of my most useful instructions, and point out how the truth of Scripture is illustrated by the crimes and corruptions which history records, and how the same pride, covetousness, ambition, turbulence, and deceit, which bring misery on empires, destroy the peace of families. To history, geography and chronology are such indispensable appendages, that it would be superfluous to insist on their usefulness. As to astronomy, while "the heavens declare the glory of God," it seems a kind of impiety not to give young people some insight into it."

"I hope," said Sir John, "that you do not exclude the modern languages from your plan." "As to the French," replied Mr. Stanley, "with that thorough inconsistency which is common to man, the demand for it seems to have risen in exact proportion

as

as it ought to have sunk*. I would not however rob my children of a language in which, though there are more books to be avoided, there are more that deserve to be read, than in all the foreign languages put together."

"If you prohibit Italian," said Sir John, laughing, "I will serve you as Cowper advised the boys and girls to serve Johnson for depreciating Henry and Emma; I will join the musical and poetical ladies in tearing you to pieces, as the Thracian damsels did Orpheus, and send your head with his,

Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore.

"You remember me, my dear Belfield," replied Mr. Stanley, "a warm admirer of the exquisite beauties of Italian poetry. But a father feels, or rather judges differently from the mere man of taste, and as a father, I cannot help regretting, that what is commonly

* See an ingenious little treatise entitled Latium Redivivum, or the modern use of the Latin language and the prevalence of the French

monly put into the hands of our daughters, is so amatory, that it has a tendency to soften those minds which rather want to be invigorated.

"There are few things I more deprecate for girls than a poetical education, the evils of which I saw sadly exemplified in a young friend of Mrs. Stanley's. She had beauty and talents. Her parents, enchanted with both, left her entirely to her own guidance. She yielded herself up to the uncontrolled rovings of a vagrant fancy. When a child, she wrote verses, which were shewn in her presence to every guest. Their flattery completed her intoxication. She afterwards translated Italian sonnets, and composed elegies of which love was the only theme. These she was encouraged by her mother to recite herself, in all companies, with a pathos and sensibility which delighted her parents, but alarmed her more prudent friends.

"She grew up with the confirmed opinion that the two great and sole concerns of human life were love and poetry. She con-

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sidered them as inseparably connected, and she resolved in her own instance never to violate so indispensable a union. The object of her affection was unhappily chosen, and the effects of her attachment were such as might have been expected from a connection formed on so slight a foundation. In the perfections with which she invested her lover, she gave the reins to her imagination, when she thought she was only consulting her heart. She picked out and put together all the fine qualities of all the heroes, of all the poets she had ever read, and into this finished creature, her fancy transformed her admirer.

"Love and poetry commonly influence the two sexes in a very disproportionate degree. With men, each of them is only one passion among many. Love has various and powerful competitors in hearts divided between ambition, business, and pleasure. Poetry is only one amusement in minds distracted by a thousand tumultuous pursuits; whereas in girls of ardent tempers, whose feelings are not curbed by re-

 straint,

straint, and regulated by religion, love is considered as the great business of their earthly existence. It is cherished, not as 'the cordial drop,' but as the whole contents of the cup; the remainder is considered only as froth or dregs. The unhappy victim not only submits to the destructive dominion of a despotic passion, but glories in it. So at least did this ill starred girl.

"The sober duties of a family had early been transferred to her sister, as far beneath the attention of so fine a genius; while she abandoned herself to studies, which kept her imagination in a fever, and to a passion which those studies continually fed and inflamed. Both together completed her delirium. She was ardent, generous, and sincere; but violent, imprudent, and vain to excess. She set the opinion of the world at complete defiance, and was not only totally destitute of judgment and discretion herself, but despised them in others. Her lover and her muse were to her instead of the whole world.

"After having for some years exchanged

sonnets,

sonnets, under the names of Laura and Petrarch, and elegies under those of Sappho and Phaon; the lover, to whom all this had been mere sport, the gratification of vanity, and the recreation of an idle hour, grew weary:

Younger and fairer he another saw.

He drew off. Her verses were left unanswered, her reproaches unpitied. Laura wept, and Sappho raved in vain.

"The poor girl, to whom all this visionary romance had been a serious occupation, which had swallowed up cares and duties, now realized the woes she had so often admired and described. Her upbraidings only served to alienate still more the heart of her deserter; and her despair, which he had the cruelty to treat as fictitious, was to him a subject of mirth and ridicule. Her letters were exposed, her expostulatory verses read at clubs and taverns, and the unhappy Sappho toasted in derision.

"All her ideal refinements now degenerated into practical improprieties. The

 public

public avowal of her passion drew on her from the world charges which she had not merited. Her reputation was wounded, her health declined, her peace was destroyed. She experienced the dishonours of guilt without its gratitude, and in the bosom of life fell the melancholy victim of a mistaken education and an undisciplined mind."

Mrs. Stanley dropped a silent tear to the memory of her unhappy friend, the energies of whose mind she said would, had they been rightly directed, have formed a fine character.

"But none of the things of which I have been speaking," resumed Mr. Stanley, "are the great and primary odjects of instruction. —The inculcation of fortitude, prudence, humility, temperance, self-denial—this is education. These are things which we endeavour to promote far more than arts or languages. These are tempers, the habit of which should be laid in early, and followed up constantly, as there is no day in life which will not call them into exercise; and

and how can that be practised which has never been acquired?

"Perseverance, meekness, and industry," continued he, "are the qualities we most carefully cherish and commend. For poor Laura's sake I make it a point never to extol any indications of genius. Genius has pleasure enough in its own high aspirings. Nor am I indeed over much delighted with a great blossom of talents. I agree with good Bishop Hall, that it is better to thin the blossoms, that the rest may thrive; and that, in encouraging too many propensities, one faculty may not starve another."

Lady Belfield expressed herself grateful for the hints Mr. Stanley had thrown out, which could not but be of importance to her who had so large a family. After some further questions from her he proceeded.

"I have partly explained to you, my dear Madam, why, though I would not have every woman learn every thing, yet why I would give every girl, in a certain station

of life, some one amusing accomplishment. There is here and there a strong mind, which requires a more substantial nourishment than the common education of girls affords. To such, and to such only, would I furnish the quiet resource of a dead language, as a solid aliment which may fill the mind without inflating it.

"But that no acquirement may inflate it, let me add, there is but one sure corrective. Against learning, against talents of any kind, nothing can steady the head, unless you fortify the heart with real Christianity. In raising the moral edifice, we must sink deep in proportion as we build high. We must widen the foundation if we extend the superstructure. Religion alone can counteract the aspirings of genius, can regulate the pride of talents.

"And let such women as are disposed to be vain of their comparatively petty attainments, look up with admiration to those two contemporary shining examples, the venerable Elizabeth Carter, and the blooming Elizabeth Smith. I knew them both,

 and

and to know was to revere them. In *them* let our young ladies contemplate profound and various learning chastised by true Christian humility. In *them,* let them venerate acquirements which would have been distinguished in a University, meekly softened, and beautifully shaded by the gentle exertion of every domestic virtue, the unaffected exercise of every feminine employment."

CHAP. XL.

EVER since Mr. Tyrrel had been last with us, I had observed an unusual seriousness in the countenance of Sir John Belfield, though accompanied with his natural complacency. His mind seemed intent on something he wished to communicate. The first time we were both alone in the library with Mr. Stanley, Sir John said, "Stanley the conversations we have lately had, and especially the last with Tyrrel, in which you bore so considerable a part, have furnished me with agreeable matter for reflection. I hope the pleasure will not be quite destitute of profit."

"My dear Sir John," replied Mr. Stanley, "in conversing with Mr. Tyrrel, I labour under a disadvantage common to every man, who, when he is called to defend some

important principle which he thinks attacked, or undervalued, is brought into danger of being suspected to under-value others which, if they in their turn were assailed, he would defend with equal zeal. When points of the last importance are slighted as insignificant, in order exclusively to magnify one darling opinion, I am driven to appear as if I opposed that important tenet, which, if I may so speak, seems pitted against the others. Those who do not previously know my principles, might almost suspect me of being an opposer of that prime doctrine, which I really consider as the leading principle of Christianity."

"Allow me to say," returned Sir John, "that my surprise has been equal to my satisfaction. Those very doctrines which you maintained, I had been assured were the very tenets you rejected. Many of our acquaintance, who do not come near enough to judge, or who would not be competent to judge if they did, ascribe the strictness of your practice to some unfounded peculiari-

ties

ties of opinion, and suspect that the doctrines of Tyrrel, though somewhat modified, a little more rationally conceived, and more ably expressed, are the doctrines held by you, and by every man who rises above the ordinary standard of what the world calls religious men. And what is a little absurd and inconsequent, they ascribe to these supposed dangerous doctrines, his abstinence from the diversions, and his disapprobation of the manners and maxims of the world. *Your* opinions, however, I always suspected could not be very pernicious, the effects of which from the whole tenor of your life, I knew to be so salutary."

"My dear Belfield," said Mr. Stanley, "men of the world are guilty of a striking inconsistency in the charge they bring against religious men. They accuse them at once of maintaining doctrines which lead to licentiousness, and of over strictness in their practice. One of them may be true: both cannot be so."

"I now find upon full proof," replied Sir

Sir John, "that there is nothing in your sentiments but what a man of sense may approve; nothing but what, if he be really a man of sense, he will without scruple, adopt. May I be enabled more fully more practically, to adopt them! You shall point out to me such a course of reading as may not only clear up my remaining difficulties, but what is infinitely more momentous than the solution of any abstract question, may help to awaken me to a more deep and lively sense of my own individual interest in this great concern!"

Mr. Stanley's benevolent countenance was lighted up with more than its wonted animation. He did not attempt to conceal the deep satisfaction with which his heart was penetrated. He modestly referred his friend to Doctor Barlow, as a far more able casuist, though not a more cordial friend. For my own part, I felt my heart expand towards Sir John, with new sympathies and an enlarged affection. I felt nobler motives of attachment, an attachment which I hoped

would

would be perpetuated beyond the narrow bounds of this perishable world.

"My dear Sir John," said Mr. Stanley, "it is among the daily but comparatively petty trials of every man who is deeply in earnest to secure his immortal interests, to be classed with low and wild enthusiasts whom his judgment condemns, with hypocrites against whom his principles revolt, and with men, pious and conscientious I am most willing to allow, but differing widely from his own views; with others who evince a want of charity in some points, and a want of judgment in most. To be identified, I say, with men so different from yourself, because you hold in common some great truths which all real Christians have held in all ages, and because you agree with them, in avoiding the blameable excesses of dissipation, is among the sacrifices of reputation which a man must be contented to make, who is earnest in the great object of a Christian pursuit. I trust, however, that, through divine grace, I shall never renounce my integrity for the

praise

praise of men, who have so little consistency, that though they pretend their quarrel is with your faith, yet who would not care how extravagant your belief was, if your practice assimilated with their own. I trust, on the other hand, that I shall always maintain my candour towards those with whom we are unfairly involved; men religious, though somewhat eccentric, devout, though injudicious, and sincere, though mistaken; but who, with all their errors, against which I protest, and with all their indiscretion, which I lament, and with all their ill-judged, because irregular zeal, which I blame, I shall ever think—always excepting hypocrites and false pretenders—are better men, and in a safer state than their revilers."

"I have often suspected," said I, "that under the plausible pretence of objecting to your creed, men conceal their quarrel with the commandments."

"My dear Stanley," said Sir John, "but for this visit I might have continued in the common error, that there was but one

description

description of religious professors. That a fanatical spirit, and a fierce adoption of one or two particular doctrines, to the exclusion of all the rest, with a total indifference to morality, and a sovereign contempt of prudence, made up the character against which, I confess, I entertained a secret disgust. Still, however, I loved *you* too well, and had too high an opinion of your understanding, to suspect that you would ever be drawn into those practical errors, to which I had been told your theory inevitably led. Yet I own I had an aversion to this dreaded enthusiasm which drove me into the opposite extreme."

"How many men have I known," replied Mr. Stanley, smiling, "who, from their dread of a burning zeal, have taken refuge in a freezing indifference! As to the two extremes of heat and cold, neither of them is the true climate of Christianity; yet the fear of each drives men of opposite complexions into the other, instead of fixing them in the temperate zone which lies

between them, and which is the region of genuine piety.

"The truth is, Sir John, *your* society considers earnestness in religion as the fever of a distempered understanding, while in inferior concerns they admire it as the indication of a powerful mind. Is zeal in politics accounted the mark of a vulgar intellect? Did they consider the unquenchable ardour of Pitt, did they regard the lofty enthusiasm of Fox, as evidences of a feeble or a disordered mind? Yet I will venture to assert, that ardour in religion is as much more noble than ardour in politics, as the prize for which it contends is more exalted. It is beyond all comparison superior to the highest human interests, the truth and justice of which after all may possibly be mistake, and the objects of which must infallibly have an end."

Dr. Barlow came in, and seeing us earnestly engaged, desired that he might not interrupt the conversation. Sir John in a few words informed him what had passed, and with a most graceful humility spoke of

his

his own share in it, and confessed how he had been carried away by the stream of popular prejudice, respecting men who had courage to make a consistent profession of Christianity. "I now," added he, "begin to think with Addison, that singularity in religion is heroic bravery, 'because it only leaves the species by soaring above it.'"

After some observations from Dr. Barlow, much in point, he went on to remark that the difficulties of a clergyman were much increased by the altered manners of the age. "The tone of religious writing," said he, "but especially the tone of religious conversation, is much lowered. The language of a Christian minister in discussing Christian topics will naturally be consonant to that of Scripture. The Scripture speaks of a man being *renewed in the spirit of his mind*, of his being *sanctified by the grace of God*. Now how much circumlocution is necessary for us in conversing with a man of the world, to convey the sense, without adopting the expression; and what pains must

we

we take to make our meaning intelligible without giving disgust, and to be useful without causing irritation!"

Sir John. "But my good Doctor, is it not a little puritanical to make use of such solemn expressions in company?"

Dr. Barlow. "Sir, it is worse than puritanical, it is hypocritical, where the principle itself does not exist; and even where it does, it is highly inexpedient to introduce such phrases into general company at all. But I am speaking of serious private conversation, when, if a minister is really in earnest, there is nothing absurd in his prudent use of Scripture expressions. One great difficulty, and which obstructs the usefulness of a clergyman, in conversation with many persons of the higher class, who would be sorry not to be thought religious, is, that they keep up so little acquaintance with the Bible, that, from their ignorance of its venerable phraseology, they are offended at the introduction of a text, not because it is Scripture, for that they maintain a kind of general reverence,

but

but because from not reading it, they do not know that it *is* Scripture.

"I once lent a person of rank and talents an admirable sermon, written by one of our first divines. Though deeply pious, it was composed with uncommon spirit and elegance, and I thought it did not contain one phrase which could offend the most fastidious critic. When he returned it, he assured me that he liked it much on the whole, and should have approved it altogether, but for one methodistical expression. To my utter astonishment he pointed to the exceptionable passage, 'There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.' The chapter and verse not being mentioned, he never suspected it was a quotation from the Bible."

"This is one among many reasons," said Mr. Stanley, "why I so strenuously insist that young persons should read the Scriptures, unaltered, unmodernized, unmutilated, unabridged. If parents do not make a

point

point of this, the peculiarities of sacred language will become really obsolete to the next generation."

In answer to some further remarks of Sir John, Mr. Stanley said, smiling, "I have sometime amused myself with making a collection of certain things, which are now considered and held up by a pretty large class of men as the infallible symptoms of methodism. Those which at present occur to my recollection are the following: Going to church in the afternoon, maintaining family prayer, not travelling, or giving great dinners or other entertainments on Sundays, rejoicing in the abolition of the slave trade, promoting the religious instruction of the poor at home, subscribing to the Bible Society, and contributing to establish Christianity abroad. These, though the man attend no eccentric clergyman, hold no one enthusiastic doctrine, and associate with no fanatic, is sober in his conversation, consistent in his practice, correct in his whole deportment, will infallibly fix on him the charge

charge of methodism. Any *one* of these will excite suspicion, but all united will not fail absolutely to stigmatize him. The most devoted attachment to the establishment will avail him nothing, if not accompanied with a fiery intolerance, towards all who differ. Without intolerance, his charity is construed into unsoundness, and his candour into disaffection. He is accused of assimilating with the principles of every weak brother whom, though his judgment compels him to blame, his candour forbids him to calumniate. Saint and hypocrite are now, in the scoffer's lexicon, become convertible terms; the last being always implied where the first is sneeringly used."

"It has often appeared to me," said I, "that the glory of a tried Christian somewhat resembles that of a Roman victor, in whose solemn processions, among the odes of gratulation, a mixture of abuse and railing made part of the triumph."

"Happily," resumed Mr. Stanley, "a religious man knows the worst he is likely to

to suffer. In the present established state of things he is not called, as in the first ages of Christianity, to be made a spectacle to the world and to angels, and to men. But he must submit to be assailed by three different descriptions of persons. From the first he must be contented to have principles imputed to him which he abhors, motives which he disdains, and ends which he deprecates. He must submit to have the energies of his well regulated piety confounded with the follies of the fanatic, and his temperate zeal blended with the ravings of the insane. He must submit to be involved in the absurdities of the extravagant, in the duplicity of the designing, and in the mischiefs of the dangerous; to be reckoned among the disturbers of that church which he would defend with his blood, and of that government which he is perhaps supporting in every possible direction. Every means is devised to shake his credit. From such determined assailants no prudence

can protect his character, no private integrity can defend it, no public service rescue it."

"I have often wondered," said Sir John, "at the success of attacks which seemed to have nothing but the badness of the cause to recommend them. But the assailant, whose object it is to make good men ridiculous, well knows that he has secured to himself a large patronage in the hearts of all the envious, the malignant, and the irreligious, who, like other levellers, find it more easy to establish the equality of mankind, by abasing the lofty than by elevating the low."

"In my short experience of life," said I, when Sir John had done speaking, "I have often observed it as a hardship, that a man must not only submit to be condemned for doctrines he disowns, but also for consequences which others may draw from the doctrines he maintains, though he himself both practically and speculatively disavows any such consequences."

"There

"There is another class of enemies," resumed Mr. Stanley. "To do them justice, it is not so much the individual Christian, as Christianity itself, which *they* hope to discredit; *that* Christianity which would not only restrain the conduct, but would humble the heart; which strips them of the pride of philosophy, and the arrogant plea of merit; which would save, but will not flatter them. In this enlightened period however, for men who would preserve any character, it would be too gross to attack religion itself, and they find they can wound her more deeply, and more creditably through the sides of her professors."

"I have observed," said I, "that the uncandid censurer always picks out the worst man of a class, and then confidently produces him as being a fair specimen of it."

"From our more thoughtless, but less uncharitable acquaintance, the gay and the busy," resumed Mr. Stanley, "we have to

 sustain

sustain a gentler warfare. A little reproach, a good deal of ridicule, a little suspicion of our designs, and not a little compassion for our gloomy habits of life, and implied contempt for our judgment, some friendly hints that we carry things too far, an intimation that being righteous over much in the practice has a tendency to produce derangement in the faculties. These are the petty but daily trials of every man who is seriously in earnest; and petty indeed they are to him whose prospects are well grounded, and whose hope is full of immortality."

"This hostility which a real Christian is sure to experience," said I, "is not without its uses. It quickens his vigilance over his own heart, and enlarges his charity towards others whom reproach perhaps may as unjustly stigmatize. It teaches him to be on his guard, lest he should really deserve the censure he incurs; and what I presume is of no small importance, it teaches him to sit loose to human opinion; it

it weakens his excessive tenderness for reputation, makes him more anxious to deserve, and less solicitous to obtain it."

"It were well," said Dr. Barlow, "if the evil ended here. The established Christian will evince himself to be, such by not shrinking from the attack. But the misfortune is, that the dread of this attack keeps back well disposed but vacillating characters. They are intimidated at the idea of partaking the censure, though they know it to be false. When they hear the reputation of men of piety assailed, they assume an indifference which they are far from feeling. They listen to reproaches cast on characters which they inwardly revere, without daring to vindicate them. They hear the most attached subjects accused of disaffection, and the most sober-minded churchman of innovation, without venturing to repel the charge, lest they should be suspected of leaning to the party. They are afraid fully to avow that their own principles are the same, lest they

 should

should be involved in the same calumny. To efface this suspicion, they affect a coldness which they do not feel, and treat with levity what they inwardly venerate. Very young men from this natural timidity, are led to risk their eternal happiness through the dread of a laugh. Though they know that they have not only religion but reason on their side, yet it requires a hardy virtue to repel a sneer, and an intrepid principle to confront a sarcasm. Thus their own mind loses its firmness; religion loses their support, the world loses the benefit which their example could afford, and they themselves become liable to the awful charge which is denounced against him who is ashamed of his Christian profession."

"Men of the world," said Sir John, are extremely jealous of whatever may be thought *particular*; they are frightened at every thing that has not the sanction of public opinion, and the stamp of public applause. They are impatient of the slight-

est

est suspicion of censuring what may be supposed to affect the credit of their judgment, though often indifferent enough as to any blame that may attach to their conduct. They have been accustomed to consider strict religion as a thing which militates against good taste, and to connect the idea of something unclassical and inelegant, something aukward and unpopular, something uncouth and ill-bred, with the peculiar doctrines of Christianity; doctrines which, though there is no harm in believing, they think there can be no good in avowing."

"It is a little hard," said Mr. Stanley, "that men of piety, who are allowed to possess good sense on all other occasions, and whose judgment is respected in all the ordinary concerns of life, should not have a little credit given them in the matters of religion, but that they should be at once transformed into ideots or madmen, in that very point which affords the noblest exercise to the human faculties."

"A Christian then," said I, "if human

applause be his idol, is of all men most miserable. He forfeits his reputation every way. He is accused by the men of the world of going too far; by the enthusiast of not going far enough. While it is one of the best evidences of his being right, that he is rejected by one party for excess, and by the other for deficiency."

"What then is to be done?" said Dr. Barlow. "Must a discreet and pious man give up a principle because it has been disfigured by the fanatic, or abused by the hypocrite, or denied by the sceptic, or reprobated by the formalist, or ridiculed by the men of the world? He should rather support it with an earnestness proportioned to its value; he should rescue it from the injuries it has sustained from its enemies, and the discredit brought on it by its imprudent friends. He should redeem it from the enthusiasm which misconceives, and from the ignorance or malignity which misrepresents it. If the learned and the judicious are silent in proportion as the illiterate and the vulgar are obtrusive and loquacious,

cious, the most important truths will be abandoned by those who are best able to unfold and to defend them, while they will be embraced exclusively by those who misunderstand, degrade, and debase them. Because the unlettered are absurd, must the able cease to be religious? If there is to be an abandonment of every Christian principle, because it has been unfairly, unskilfully, or inadequately treated, there would, one by one, be an abandonment of every doctrine of the New Testament."

"I felt myself bound," said Mr. Stanley, "to act on this principle in our late conversation with Mr. Tyrrel. I would not refuse to assert with him the doctrines of grace, but I endeavoured to let him see that I had adopted them in a scriptural sense. I would not try to convince him that he was wrong, by disowning a truth because he abused it. I would cordially reject all the bad use he makes of any opinion, without rejecting the opinion itself if the bible will bear me out in the belief of it. But I would scrupulously reject

all the other opinions which he connects with it, and with which I am persuaded it has no connection."

"The nominal Christian," said Dr. Barlow, who insists that religion resides in the understanding only, may contend that love to God, gratitude to our Redeemer, and sorrow for our offences, are enthusiastic extravagances; and effectually repress by ridicule and sarcasm, those feelings which the devout heart recognizes, and which scripture sanctions. On the other hand, those very feelings are inflamed, exaggerated, distorted, and misrepresented, as including the whole of religion, by the intemperate enthusiast, who thinks reason has nothing to do in the business; but who, trusting to tests not warranted by scripture, is governed by fancies, feelings, and visions of his own.

"Between these pernicious extremes, what course is the sober Christian to pursue? Must he discard from his heart all pious affections because the fanatic abuses them, and the fastidious deny their exist-

 ence?

ence? This would be like insisting that because one man happens to be sick of a dead palsy, and another of a phrenzy fever, there is therefore in the human constitution no such temperate medium as sound health.

CHAP. XLI.

SINCE the conversation which had accidentally led to the discovery of Miss Stanley's acquirements, I could not forbear surveying the perfect arrangements of the family, and the compleatly elegant but not luxurious table, with more than ordinary interest. I felt no small delight in reflecting that all this order and propriety were produced without the smallest deduction from mental cultivation.

I could not refrain from mentioning this to Mrs. Stanley. She was not displeased with my observation, though she cautiously avoided saying any thing which might be construed into a wish to set off her daughter. As she seemed surprised at my knowlege of the large share her Lucilla had in the direction of the family concerns, I could not, in the imprudence of

of my satisfaction, conceal the conversation I had had with my old friend Mrs. Comfit.

After this avowal she felt that any reserve on this point would look like affectation, a littleness which would have been unworthy of her character. "I am frequently blamed by my friends," said she, "for taking some of the load from my own shoulders, and laying it on hers. 'Poor thing she is too young!' is the constant cry of the fashionable mothers. My general answer is, you do not think your daughters of the same age too young to be married, though you know marriage must bring with it these, and still heavier cares. Surely then Lucilla is not too young to be initiated into that useful knowlege which will hereafter become no inconsiderable part of her duty. The acquisition would really be burdensome then, if it were not lightened by preparatory practice now. I have I trust convinced my daughters, that though there is no great merit in possessing this sort of know-

lege, yet to be destitute of it is highly discreditable."

In several houses where I had visited, I had observed the forwardness of the parents, the mother especially, to make a display of the daughter's merits,—"so dutiful! so notable! such an excellent nurse!" The girl was then called out to sing or to play, and was thus, by that *inconsistency* which my good mother deprecated, kept in the full exhibition of those very talents which are most likely to interfere with nursing and notableness. But since I had been on my present visit, I had never once heard my friends extol their Lucilla, or bring forward any of her excellences. I had however observed their eyes fill with a delight, which they could not suppress, when her merits were the subject of the praise of others.

I took notice of this difference of conduct to Mrs. Stanley. "I have often," said she, "been so much hurt at the indelicacy to which you allude, that I very early resolved to avoid it. If the girl in question

question does not deserve the commendation, it is not only disingenuous but dishonest. If she does, it is a coarse, and not very honourable stratagem for getting her off. But if the daughter be indeed all that a mother's partial fondness believes," added she, her eyes filling with tears of tenderness, "how can she be in such haste to deprive herself of the solace of her life? how can she by gross acts wound that delicacy in her daughter, which to a man of refinement, would be one of her chief attractions, and which will be lowered in his esteem, by the suspicion that she may concur in the indiscretion of the mother.

"As to Lucilla," added she, "Mr. Stanley and I sometimes say to each other, 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols!' O my dear young friend! it is in vain to dissemble her unaffected worth and sweetness. She is not only our delightful companion, but our confidential friend. We encourage her to give us her opinion on matters of business, as well

as

as of taste; and having reflected as well as read a good deal, she is not destitute of materials on which to exercise her reasoning powers. We have never repressed her natural vivacity, because we never saw it like Phœbe's, in danger of carrying her off from the straight line."

I thanked Mrs. Stanley for her affectionate frankness, with a warmth which shewed the cordial interest I took in her who was the object of it; company coming in interrupted our interesting tête-a-tête.

After tea, I observed the party in the saloon to be thinner than usual. Sir John and Lady Belfield having withdrawn to write letters; and that individual having quitted the room whose presence would have reconciled me to the absence of all the rest, I stole out to take a solitary walk. At the distance of a quarter of a mile from the Park Gate, on a little common, I observed, for the first time, the smallest and neatest cottage I ever beheld. There was a flourishing young orchard behind it, and a little court full

of

of flowers in front. But I was particularly attracted by a beautiful rose tree in full blossom which grew against the house, and almost covered the clean white walls. As I knew this sort of rose was a particular favourite of Lucilla's, I opened the low wicket which led into the little court, and looked about for some living creature of whom I might have begged the flowers. But seeing no one, I ventured to gather a branch of the roses, and the door being opened, walked into the house, in order to acknowlege my theft, and make my compensation. In vain I looked round the little neat kitchen; no one appeared.

I was just going out, when the sound of a soft female voice over head arrested my attention. Impelled by a curiosity which, considering the rank of the inhabitants, I did not feel it necessary to resist, I softly stole up the narrow stairs, cautiously stooping as I ascended, the lowness of the ceiling not allowing me to walk upright. I stood still at the door of a little chamber, which was left half open to admit the air.

I gently

I gently put my head through. What were my emotions when I saw Lucilla Stanley kneeling by the side of a little clean bed, a large old Bible spread open on the bed before her, out of which she was reading one of the penitential Psalms to a pale emaciated female figure, who lifted up her failing eyes, and clasped her feeble hands in solemn attention!

Before two little bars which served for a grate, knelt Phœbe, with one hand stirring some broth which she had brought from home, and with the other fanning with her straw bonnet the dying embers, in order to make the broth boil; yet seemingly attentive to her sister's reading. Her dishevelled hair, the deep flush which the fire, and her labour of love gave her naturally animated countenance, formed a fine contrast to the angelic tranquillity and calm devotion which sat on the face of Lucilla. Her voice was inexpressibly sweet and penetrating, while faith, hope, and charity seemed to beam from her fine uplifted eyes. On account of the

closeness

closeness of the room, she had thrown off her hat, cloak, and gloves, and laid them on the bed; and her fine hair, which had escaped from its confinement, shaded that side of her face which was next the door, and prevented her seeing me.

I scarcely dared to breathe lest I should interrupt such a scene. It was a subject not unworthy of Raphael. She next began to read the forty-first Psalm, with the meek, yet solemn emphasis of devout feeling.—"Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy, the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble." Neither the poor woman nor myself could hold out any longer. She was overcome by her gratitude, and I by my admiration, and we both at the same moment involuntarily exclaimed, Amen! I sprang forward with a motion which I could no longer control. Lucilla saw me, started up in confusion,

and blush'd
Celestial rosy red.

Then

Then eagerly endeavouring to conceal the Bible by drawing her hat over it, "Phœbe," said she with all the composure she could assume, "is the broth ready?" Phœbe, with her usual gaiety called out to me to come and assist, which I did, but so unskilfully, that she chid me for my aukwardness.

It was an interesting sight to see one of these blooming sisters lift the dying woman in her bed and support her with her arm, while the other fed her, her own weak hand being unequal to the task. At that moment how little did the splendors and vanities of life appear in my eyes! and how ready was I to exclaim with Wolsey,

Vain pomp and glory of the world, I hate you.

When they had finished their pious office, I enquired if the poor woman had no attendant. Phœbe, who was generally the chief speaker, said, "she had a good daughter, who is out at work by day, but takes care of her mother at night; but she is never left alone, for she has a little grand-

daughter

daughter who attends her in the mean time; but as she is obliged to go once a day to the Grove to fetch provisions, we generally contrive to send her while we are here, that Dame Alice may never be left alone."

While we were talking, I heard a little weary step, painfully climbing up the stairs, and looked round, expecting to see the grand-daughter; but it was little Kate Stanley, with a lap full of dry sticks, which she had been collecting for the poor woman's fire. The sharp point of the sticks had forced their way in many places through the white muslin frock, part of which, together with her bonnet, she had left in the hedge, which she had been robbing. At this loss she expressed not much concern, but lamented not a little that sticks were so scarce, that she feared the broth had been spoiled, from her being so long in picking them, but *indeed* she could not help it. I was pleased with these under allotments, these low degrees in the scale of charity.

I had gently laid my roses on the hat of

Miss

Miss Stanley, as it lay on the Bible, and before we left the room, as I drew near the good old Dame to slip a couple of guineas into her hand, I had the pleasure of seeing Lucilla, who thought herself unobserved, retire to a little window, and fasten the roses into the crown of her hat like a garland. When the grand-daughter returned loaded with the daily bounty from the Grove, we took our leave, followed by the prayers and blessings of the good woman.

As we passed by the rose-tree, the orchard, and the court, Phœbe, said to me, "An't you glad that poor people can have such pleasures?" I told her it doubled my gratification at once to witness the enjoyment, and to trace the hand which conferred it; for she had owned it was *their* work. "We have always," replied Phœbe, "a particular satisfaction in observing a neat little flower garden about a cottage, because it holds out a comfortable indication that the inhabitants are free from absolute want, before they think of these little embellishments."

"It

"It looks also," said Miss Stanley, "as if the woman, instead of spending her few leisure moments in gadding abroad, employed them in adorning her little habitation, in order to make it more attractive to her husband. And we know more than one instance in this village in which the man has been led to give up the public house by the innocent ambition of improving on her labours."

I asked her what first inspired her with such fondness for gardening, and how she had acquired so much skill and taste in this elegant art? She blushed and said, "she was afraid I should think her romantic, if she were to confess that she had caught both the taste and the passion, as far as she possessed either, from an early and an intimate acquaintance with the Paradise Lost, of which, she considered the beautiful description of scenery and plantations as the best precept for landscape gardening. Milton," she said, "both excited the taste and supplied the rules. He taught the art, and inspired the love of it."

From the gardens of Paradise the transi-

tion

tion to its heroine was easy and natural. On my asking her opinion of this portrait, as drawn by Milton, she replied, "That she considered Eve in her state of innocence, as the most beautiful model of the delicacy, propriety, grace, and elegance of the female character which any poet ever exhibited. Even after her fall," added she, "there is something wonderfully touching in her remorse, and affecting in her contrition."

"We are probably," replied I, "more deeply affected with the beautifully contrite expressions of repentance in our first parents for being so deeply involved in the consequences of the offence which occasioned it."

"And yet," replied she, "I am a little affronted with the poet, that while, with a noble justness, he represents Adam's grief at his expulsion, as chiefly arising from his being banished from the presence of his Maker, the sorrows of Eve seem too much to arise from being banished from her flowers. The grief, though never grief was so beautifully eloquent, is rather too exquisite,

her

her substantial ground for lamentation considered."

Seeing me going to speak, she stopped me with a smile, saying, "I see by your looks that you are going, with Mr. Addison,' to vindicate the poet, and to call this a just appropriation of the sentiment to the sex; but surely the disproportion in the feeling here is rather too violent, though I own the loss of her flowers *might* have aggravated any common privation. There is, however, no female character in the whole compass of poetry in which I have ever taken so lively an interest, and no poem that ever took such powerful possession of my mind."

If any thing had been wanting to my full assurance of the sympathy of our tastes and feelings this would have completed my conviction. It struck me as the Virgilian lots formerly struck the superstitious. Our mutual admiration of the Paradise Lost, and of its heroine, seemed to bring us nearer together than we had yet been. Her remarks, which I gradually drew from her in the

course of our walk, on the construction of the fable, the richness of the imagery, the elevation of the language, the sublimity and just appropriation of the sentiments, the artful structure of the verse, and the variety of the characters, convinced me that she had imbibed her taste from the purest sources. It was easy to trace her knowlege of the best authors, though she quoted none.

"This," said I exultingly to myself, "is the true learning of a lady; a knowlege that is rather detected than displayed, that is felt in its effects on her mind and conversation; and that is seen not by her citing learned names, or adducing long quotations, but in the general result, by the delicacy of her taste, and the correctness of her sentiments."

In our way home I made a merit with little Kate, not only by rescuing her hat from the hedge, but by making a little provision of wood under it, of larger sticks than she could gather, which she joyfully promised to assist the grand-daughter, in carrying to the cottage.

I ven-

I ventured with as much diffidence as if I had been soliciting a pension for myself, to entreat that I might be permitted to undertake the putting forward Dame Alice's little girl in the world, as soon as she shall be released from her attendance on her grandmother. My proposal was graciously accepted, on condition that it met with Mr. and Mrs. Stanley's approbation.

When we joined the party at supper, it was delightful to observe that the habits of religious charity were so interwoven with the texture of these girls' minds; that the evening which had been so interesting to me, was to them only a common evening marked with nothing particular. It never occurred to them to allude to it; and once or twice when I was tempted to mention it, my imprudence was repressed by a look of the most significant gravity from Lucilla.

I was comforted, however, by observing that my roses were transferred from the hat to the hair. This did not escape the penetrating eye of Phœbe, who archly said, "I

wonder, Lucilla, what particular charm there is in Dame Alice's faded roses. I offered you some fresh ones, since we came home. I never knew you prefer withered flowers before." Lucilla made no answer, but cast down her timid eyes, and outblushed the roses on her head.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLII.

After breakfast next morning the company all dropped off one after another, except Lady Belfield, Miss Stanley, and myself. We had been so busily engaged in looking over the plan of a conservatory, which Sir John proposed to build at Beechwood, his estate in Surry, that we hardly missed them.

Little Celia, whom I called the Rosebud, had climbed up my knees, a favourite station with her, and was begging me to tell her another pretty story. I had before told her so many, that I had exhausted both my memory, and my imagination. Lucilla was smiling at my impoverished invention, when Lady Belfield was called out of the room. Her fair friend, rose mechanically to follow her. Her Ladyship begged her not to stir,

 but

but to employ the five minutes of her absence in carefully criticising the plan she held in her hand, saying she would bring back another, which Sir John had by him; and that Lucilla, who is considered as the last appeal in all matters of this nature, should decide to which the preference should be given before the architect went to work.

In a moment, I forgot my tale and my rosebud, and the conservatory, and every thing but Lucilla, whom I was beginning to address, when little Celia, pulling my coat said—"Oh, Charles," (for so I teach all the little ones to call me,) "Mrs. Comfit tells me very bad news. She says that your new curricle is come down, and that you are going to run away. Oh! don't go; I can't part with you," said the little charmer, throwing her arms round my neck.

"Will you go with me, Celia?" said I, kissing her rosy cheek. "There will be room enough in the curricle."—"Oh I should like to go," said she, "if Lucilla may go with us. Do, dear Charles, do, let Lucilla

cilla go to the Priory. She will be very good: won't you, Lucilla?" I ventured to look at Miss Stanley, who tried to laugh without succeeding, and blushed without trying at it.

On my making no reply for fear of adding to her confusion, Celia looked up piteously in my face, and cried: "And so you won't let Lucilla go home with you? I am sure the curricle will hold us all nicely, for I am very little, and Lucilla is not very big."—"Will *you* persuade her, Celia?" said I.—"O," said she, "she does not want persuading; she is willing enough, and I will run to pappa and mamma, and ask their leave, and then Lucilla will go and be glad: won't you, Lucilla?"

So saying she sprung out of my arms and ran out of the room; Lucilla would have followed and prevented her. I respectfully detained her. How could I neglect such an opportunity? Such an opening as the sweet prattler had given me it was impossible to overlook. The im-

pulse was too powerful to be resisted; I gently replaced her on her seat, and in language, which if it did any justice to my feelings, was the most ardent, tender, and respectful, poured out my whole heart. I believe my words were incohe-rent; I am sure they were sincere.

She was evidently distressed. Her emotion prevented her replying. But it was the emotion of surprise, not of resentment. Her confusion bore no symptom of displeasure. Blushing and hesitating, she at last said—"My father, Sir—my mother." Here her voice failed her. I recollected with joy, that on the application of Lord Staunton, she had allowed of no such reference, nay she had forbidden it.

"I take your references joyfully," said I, "only tell me that if I am so happy as to obtain their consent, you will not withhold yours." She ventured to raise her timid eyes to mine, and her modest but expressive look encouraged me almost as much as any words could have done.

At

At that moment the door opened, and in came Sir John with the other drawing of the conservatory in his hand. After having examined us both with his keen critical eye; "Well, Miss Stanley," said he with a look and tone which had more meaning than she could well stand, "here is the other drawing. As you look as if you had been *calmly* examining the first, you will now give me your *cool, deliberate* opinion of the merits of both." He had the cruelty to lay so much stress on the words cool, calm, and deliberate, and to pronounce them in so arch a manner, and so ironical a tone, as clearly shewed, he read in her countenance that no epithets could possibly have been so ill applied.

Lady Belfield came in immediately after. "Well, Caroline," said he, with a significant glance, "Miss Stanley has deeply considered the subject since you went; I never saw her look more interested about any thing. I don't think she is dissatisfied on the whole. General approbation is all she now

 expresses;

expresses; she will have time to spy out faults hereafter: she sees none at present. All is beauty, grace, and proportion."

As if this was not enough, in ran Celia quite out of breath—"Oh, Lucilla," cried she, "Pappa and Mamma won't let you go with Charles, though I told them you begged and prayed to go." Lucilla, the pink of whose cheeks had become crimson, said angrily, "how Celia! what do you mean?" "Oh, no," replied the child, "I mean to say that I begged and prayed, and I thought you looked as if you would like to go—though Charles did not ask you, and so I told Pappa."

This was too much. The Belfields laughed outright; but Lady Belfield had the charity to take Lucilla's hand, saying, "Come into my dressing-room, my dear, and let us settle this conservatory business. This prattling child will never let us get on." Miss Stanley followed, her face glowing with impatience—Celia, whom I detained, called after her—"Pappa only said there

was

was not room in the curricle for three, but if 'tis only a little way I am sure we could sit.—Could not we Lucilla?" Lucilla was now happily out of hearing.

Though I was hurt that her delicacy had suffered so much, yet I own I hugged the little innocent author of this confusion with additional fondness. Sir John's raillery now that Lucilla could be no longer pained by it was cordially received, or rather I was inattentive to every object but the one of which my heart was full. To be heard, to be accepted though tacitly, to be referred to parents who I knew had no will but hers,

> Was such a sacred and homefelt delight,
> Such sober certainty of waking bliss
> As I ne'er felt till now.

During the remainder of the day I found no means of speaking to Mr. Stanley. Always frank and cheerful, he neither avoided nor sought me, but the arrival of company prevented our being thrown together. Lucilla appeared at dinner as usual: a little

graver and more silent, but always unaffected, natural, and delicate. Sir John whispered to me, that she had intreated her mother to keep Celia out of the way, till this curricle business was a little got out of her head.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLIII.

THE next morning, as soon as I thought Mr. Stanley had retreated to his library, I followed him thither. He was busy writing letters. I apologized for my intrusion. He laid his papers aside, and invited me to sit by him.

"You are too good, Sir," said I, "to receive with so much kindness a culprit who appears before you ingenuously to acknowlege the infraction of a treaty into which he had the honour of entering with you. I fear that a few days are wanting of my prescribed month. I had resolved to obey you with the most religious scrupulousness; but a circumstance trifling in itself has led almost irresistibly to a declaration, which in obedience to your commands I had resolved to postpone. But though it is somewhat premature, I hope, however, you will not condemn my precipitancy. I have ventured to

to tell your charming daughter how necessary she is to my happiness. She does not reject me. She refers me to her father."

"You have your peace to make with my daughter, I can tell you, Sir," said Mr. Stanley, looking gravely, "I fear you have mortally offended her." I was dreadfully alarmed. "You know not how you afflict me, Sir," said I; "how have I offended Miss Stanley?" "Not Miss Stanley," said he, smiling, "but Miss Celia Stanley, who extremely resents having been banished from the drawing-room yesterday evening."

"If Celia's displeasure is all I have to fear, Sir, I am most fortunate. Oh, Sir, my happiness, the peace of my future life, is in your hands. But first tell me you forgive the violation of my promise."

"I am willing to believe, Charles," replied he, "that you kept the spirit of your engagement, though you broke it in the letter; and for an unpremeditated breach of an obligation of this nature, we must not, I believe, be too rigorous. Your conduct since your declaration to me has confirmed

the

the affection which your character had before excited. You were probably surprised and hurt at my cold reception of your proposal; a proposal which gave me a deeper satisfaction than I can express. Yet I was no dissembler in suppressing the pleasure I felt at an address so every way desirable. My dear Charles, I know a little of human nature, I know how susceptible the youthful heart is of impressions. I know how apt these impressions are to be obliterated, a new face, a more advantageous connexion,"—"Hold, Sir," said I, indignantly interrupting him, "you cannot think so meanly of me.—You cannot rate the son of your friend so low."

"I am very far indeed," replied he, "from rating you low. I know you abhor mercenary considerations; but I know also that you are a young man, lively, ardent, impressible. I know the rapid effect which leisure, retirement, rural scenes, daily opportunities of seeing a young woman not ugly, of conversing with a young woman not disagreeable, may produce on the heart,

or

or rather on the imagination. I was aware that seeing no other, conversing with no other, none at least that, to speak honestly, I could consider as a fair competitor, hardly left you an unprejudiced judge of the state of your own heart. I was not sure but that this sort of easy commerce might produce a feeling of complacency which might be mistaken for love. I could not consent that mere accident, mere leisure, the mere circumstance of being thrown together, should irrevocably entangle either of you. I was desirous of affording you time to see, to know, and to judge. I would not take advantage of your first emotions. I would not take advantage of your friendship for me. I would not take advantage of your feeling ardently, till I had given you time to judge temperately and examine fairly."

I assured him I was equally at a loss to express my gratitude for his kindness, and my veneration for his wisdom; and thanked him in terms of affectionate energy.

"My regard for you," said he, "is

not

not of yesterday. I have taken a warm interest in your character and happiness almost ever since you have been in being; and in a way more intimate and personal than you can suspect."

So saying he arose, unlocked the drawer of a cabinet which stood behind him, and took out a large pacquet of letters. He then resumed his seat, and holding out the direction on the covers, asked me if I was acquainted with the hand writing. A tear involuntarily started into my eye as I exclaimed—"it is the well known hand of my beloved father."

"Listen to me attentively," resumed he. "You are not ignorant that never were two men more firmly attached by all the ties which ever cemented a Christian friendship than your lamented father and myself. Our early youth was spent in the same studies, the same pleasures, the same society. 'We took sweet counsel together and went to the house of God as friends.' He condescendingly overlooked my being five or six years younger than himself. After

After his marriage with your excellent mother, the current of life carried us different ways, but without causing any abatement in the warmth of our attachment.

"I continued to spend one month every year with him at the Priory, till I myself married. You were then not more than three or four years old; and your engaging manners, and sweet temper, laid the foundation of an affection which has not been diminished by time, and the reports of your progress. Sedentary habits on the part of you father, and a rapidly increasing family on mine, kept us stationary at the two extremities of the kingdom. I settled at the Grove, and both as husband and father have been happiest of the happy.

"As soon as Lucilla was born, your father and I simultaneously formed a wish that it might be possible to perpetuate our friendship by the future union of our children."

When Mr. Stanley uttered these words, my heart beat so fast, and the agitation of my

my whole frame was so visible, that he paused for a moment, but perceiving that I was all ear, and that I made a silent motion for him to proceed, he went on.

"This was a favourite project with us. We pursued it however with the moderation of men who had a settled sense of the uncertainty of all human things, of human life itself; and with a strong conviction of the probability that our project might never be realized.

"Without too much indulging the illusions of hope, we agreed that there could be no harm in educating our children for each other; in inspiring them with corresponding tastes, similar inclinations, and especially with an exact conformity in their religious views. We never indulged the presumptuous thought of counteracting providential dispensations, of conquering difficulties which time might prove to be insuperable; and above all, we determined never to be so weak, or so unjust, as to think of compelling their affections. We had both studied the human heart

heart long enough to know that it is a perverse and wayward thing. We were convinced that it would not be dictated to in a matter which involved its dearest interests, we knew that it liked to pick out its own happiness in its own way."

As Mr. Stanley proceeded, my heart melted with grateful love for a father who, in making such a provision for my happiness, had generously left my choice so free. But while my conscience seemed to reproach me as if I had not deserved such tenderness, I rejoiced that my memory had no specific charge to bring against it.

"For all these reasons," continued Mr. Stanley, "we mutually agreed to bury our wishes in our own bosoms; to commit the event to Him by whom all events are governed; never to name you to each other but in a general way; to excite no factitious liking; to elicit no artificial passion, and to kindle neither impatience, curiosity, nor interest. Nothing more than a friendly family regard was ever manifested,

and the names of Charles and Lucilla were never mentioned together.

"In this you have found your advantage. Had my daughter been accustomed to hear you spoken of with any particularity; had she been conscious that any important consequences might have attached to your visit, you would have lost the pleasure of seeing her in her native simplicity of character. Undesigning and artless, I trust she would have been under any circumstance, but to have been unreserved and open would have been scarcely possible; nor might you, my dear Charles, with your strong sense of filial piety, have been able exactly to discriminate how much of your attachment was choice, how much was duty. The aukwardness of restraint would have diminished the pleasure of intercourse to both.

"Knowing that the childish brother and sister sort of intimacy was not the most promising mode for the developement ment

ment of your mutual sentiments, we agreed that you should not meet till within a year or two of the period when it would be proper that the union, if ever, might take place.

"We were neither of us of an age or character to indulge very romantic ideas of the doctrine of sympathies. Still we saw no reason for excluding such a possibility. If we succeeded, we knew that we were training two beings in a conformity of Christian principles, which, if they did not at once attract affection, would not fail to insure it, should inferior motives first influence your mutual liking. And if it failed, we should each have educated a Christian, who would be likely to carry piety and virtue into two other families. Much good would attend our success, and no possible evil could attend our failure.

"I could shew you, I believe, near a hundred letters on each side, of which you were the unconscious subject. Your father in his last illness, returned all mine, to

prevent a premature discovery, knowing how soon his papers would fall into your hands. If it will give you pleasure, you may peruse a correspondence, of which, for almost twenty years, you were the little hero. In reading my letters you will make yourself master of the character of Lucilla. You will read the history of her mind; you will mark the unfolding of her faculties and the progress of her education. In those of your father, you will not be sorry to trace back your own steps."

Here Mr. Stanley making a pause, I bowed my grateful acceptance of his obliging offer. I was afraid to speak, I was almost afraid to breathe, lest I should lose a word of communication so interesting.

"You now see," resumed Mr. Stanley, "why you were sent to Edinburgh. Cambridge and Oxford were too near London, and of course too near Hampshire, to have maintained the necessary separation. As soon as you left the University, your father proposed accompanying you on a visit to the

the Grove. Like fond parents, we had prepared each other to expect to see a being just such a one as each would have wished for the companion of his child.

"This was to be merely a visit of experiment. You were both too young to marry. But we were impatient to place you both in a post of observation; to see the result of a meeting; to mark what sympathy there would be between two minds formed with a view to each other.

"But vain are all the projects of men. 'Oh! blindness to the future!' You doubtless remember, that just as every thing was prepared for your journey southwards, your dear father was seized with the lingering illness of which he died. Till almost the last, he was able to write me, in his intervals of ease, short letters on the favourite topic. I remember with what joy his heart dilated, when he told me of your positive refusal to leave him, on his pressing you to pursue the plan already settled, and to make your

your visit to London and the Grove without him. I will read you the passage from his letter."—He read as follows:

"In vain have I endeavoured to drive this dear son for a short time from me. He asked with the indignant feeling of affronted filial piety, if I could propose to him any compensation for my absence from his sick couch! "I make no sacrifice to duty," said he, "in preferring you. If I make any sacrifice, it is to pleasure."

Seeing my eyes overflow with grateful tenderness, Mr. Stanley said, "if I can find his last letter I will shew it you." Then looking over the pacquet,—"here it is," said he, putting it into my hands with visible emotion. Neither of us had strength of voice to be able to read it aloud. It was written at several times.

"*Priory, Wednesday, March* 18, 1807.

"Stanley—I feel that I am dying. Death is awful, my dear friend, but it is neither surprising nor terrible. I have been too

long accustomed steadily to contemplate it at a distance, to start from it now it is near.

"As a man I have feared. As a Christian I trust I have overcome the fear. Why should I dread that, which mere reason taught me is not an extinction of my being, and which revelation has convinced me will be an improvement of it? An improvement, O how inconceivable!

"For several years I have habituated myself every day to reflect for some moments on the vanity of life, the certainty of death, the awfulness of judgment, and the duration of eternity.

"The separation from my excellent wife is a trial from which I should utterly shrink, were I not sustained by the Christian hope. When we married, we knew that we were not immortal. I have endeavoured to familiarize to her and to myself the inevitable separation, by constantly keeping up in the minds of both the idea that one of us *must* be the survivor. I have endeavoured

to

to make that idea supportable by the conviction that the survivorship will be short—the re-union certain—speedy—eternal. *O præclarum diem!** &c. &c. How gloriously does christianity exalt the rapture by ennobling the objects, of this sublime apostrophe!"

"*Friday the 20th.*

"As to the union of my son with Lucilla, you and I, my friend, have long learned from an authority higher than that classical one, of which we have frequently admired the expression, and lamented the application, that long views and remote hopes, and distant expectations become not so short-sighted, so short-lived a creature as man.† I trust, however, that our plans have been carried on with a complete conviction of this bre-

* See this whole beautiful passage in Cicero de Senectute.

† Horace, in speaking of the brevity and uncertainty of life, seldom fails to produce it as an incentive to sensual indulgence. See particularly the fourth and eleventh Odes of the first book.

 vity;

vity; with an entire acquiescence in the will of the great arbiter of life and death. I have told Charles, that it is my wish that he should visit you soon after my death. I durst not command it—for this incomparable youth, who has sacrificed so much to his father—will find that he has a mother worthy of still greater sacrifices. As soon as he can prevail on himself to leave her, you will see him. May he and your Lucilla behold each other with the eyes with which each of us views his own child! If they see each other with indifference, never let them know our wishes. It would perplex and hamper those to whom we wish perfect freedom of thought and action. If they conceive a mutual attachment, reveal our project. In such minds, it will strengthen that attachment. The approbation of a living and the desire of a deceased parent, will sanctify their union.

"I must break off through weakness."

"*Monday*

"*Monday* 23.

"I resume my pen, which I thought I had held for the last time. May God bless and direct our children! Infinite wisdom permits me not to see their union. Indeed my interest in all earthly things weakens. Even my solicitude for this event is somewhat diminished. The most important circumstance, if it have not God for its object, now seems comparatively little. The longest life with all its concerns shrinks to a point, in the sight of a dying man whose eye is filled by eternity. Eternity! Oh my friend, Eternity is a depth which no geometry can measure, no arithmetic calculate, no imagination conceive, no rhetoric describe. The eye of a dying Christian seems gifted to penetrate depths hid from the wisdom of philosophy. It looks athwart the dark valley without dismay, cheered by the bright scene beyond it. It looks with a kind of chastised impatience to that land where happiness will be only holiness perfected.

 There

There all the promises of the gospel will be accomplished. There afflicted virtue will rejoice at its past trials, and acknowlege their subservience to their present bliss. There the secret self-denials of the righteous shall be recognized and rewarded—and all the hopes of the Christian shall have their complete consummation."

"*Saturday*, 28.

"My weakness increases—I have written this at many intervals. My body faints, but in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Oh Stanley! if pain is trying, if death is awful to him, who knows in whom he has trusted; how is pain endured, how is death encountered by those who have no such support?"

"*Tuesday the* 31*st*.

"I am better to day—If I experience little of that rapture which some require, as the sign of their acceptance, I yet have a good hope through grace. Nay there are moments when I rejoice with joy, unspeakable. I would not produce this joy

joy as any certain criterion of my safety, because, from the nature of my disease, there are also moments when my spirits sink, and this might equally furnish arguments against my state, to those who decide by frames and feelings. I think my faith as sound, my pardon as sure, when these privileges are withdrawn, as when I enjoy them. No depression of spirits can make my evidence less solid, though it may render the review of them less delightful."

Friday, 3d April.

"Stanley! my departure is at hand. My eternal redemption draweth nigh. My hope is full of immortality. This is my comfort —not that my sins are few or small, but that they are, I humbly trust, pardoned through him who loved me, and gave himself for me. Faithful is HE that has promised, and HIS promises are not too great to be made good—for Omniscience is my promiser, and I have Omnipotence itself for my security. Adieu!"

* * * * *

On the cover was written in Mr. Stanley's hand—He died three days after!

* * * * *

* * * * *

It is impossible to describe the mingled and conflicting emotions of my soul, while I perused this letter. Gratitude that I had possessed such a father—sorrow that I had lost him—transport in anticipating an event which had been his earnest wish for almost twenty years—regret that he was not permitted to witness it—devout joy that he was in a state so superior to even *my* sense of happiness,—a strong feeling of the uncertainty and brevity of *all* happiness,—a solemn resolution that I would never act unworthy of such a father,— a fervent prayer that I might be enabled to keep that resolution:—all these emotions so agitated and divided my whole mind, as to render me unfit for any society, even for that of Lucilla. I withdrew, gratefully pressing Mr. Stanley's hand; he kindly returned

turned the pressure, but neither of us attempted to speak.

He silently put my father's pacquet into my hands. I shut myself into my apartment, and read for three hours, letters for which I hope to be the better in time and in eternity. I found in them a treasure of religious wisdom, excellent maxims of human prudence, a thorough acquaintance with life and manners, a keen insight into human nature in the abstract, and a nice discrimination of individual characters; admirable documents for general education, the application of those documents to my particular turn of character, and diversified methods for improving it. The pure delight to which I looked forward in reading these letters with Lucilla, soon became my predominant feeling.

I returned to the company with a sense of felicity, which the above feelings and reflections had composed into a soothing tranquillity. My joy was sobered without

being abated, I received the cordial congratulations of my friends. Mrs. Stanley behaved to me with increased affection, she presented me to her daughter, with whom I afterwards passed two hours. This interview left me nothing to desire, but that my gratitude to the Almighty dispenser of happiness might bear some little proportion to his blessings.

As I was passing through the hall after dinner, I spied little Celia peeping out of the door of the children's apartment, in hope of seeing me pass. She flew to me, and begged I would take her into the company. As I knew the interdict was taken off, I carried her into the saloon where they were sitting. She ran into Lucilla's arms, and said in a voice which she meant for a whisper, but loud enough to be heard by the whole company, "Do dear Lucilla, forgive me, I will never say another word about the curricle, and you shan't go to the Priory since you don't like it." Lucilla found means to silence her, by shewing

her the picture of the "Peacock at Home;" and without looking to observe the general smile, contrived to attract the sweet child's attention to this beautiful little poem, in spite of Sir John, who did his utmost to widen the mischief.

CHAP. XLIV.

THE next day in the afternoon Dr. Barlow called on us. By the uncommon seriousness of his countenance I saw something was the matter. "You will be shocked," said he, "to hear that Mr. Tyrrel is dying, if not actually dead. He was the night before last seized with a paralytic stroke. He lay a long time without sense or motion; a delirium followed. In a short interval of reason he sent earnestly imploring to see me. Seldom have I witnessed so distressing a scene.

"As I entered the room he fixed his glassy eyes full upon me, quite unconscious who I was, and groaned out in an inward hollow voice—"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl, for your miseries are come upon you." I asked how he did:—he replied still from St. James—"How? why my gold and silver are

are cankered, the rust of them shall witness against men; they eat up my flesh as it were fire."

"I was astonished," continued Dr. Barlow, "to see so exact a memory coupled with so wild an imagination. 'Be composed, Sir,' said I, seeing he began to recollect me, 'this deep contrition is a favourable symptom.' 'Dr. Barlow,' replied he, grasping my hand with a vehemence which corresponded with his look, 'have you never heard of riches kept by the owner thereof to his hurt? Restitution! Doctor, restitution!—and it must be immediate, or it will be too late.' I was now deeply alarmed. 'Surely, Sir,' said I, you are not unhappily driven to adopt St. James's next words—"forgive me;"—but you cannot surely have "defrauded."' 'O no, no,' cried he, 'I have been what the world calls honest, but not what the Judge of quick and dead will call so. The restitution I must make is not to the rich, for any thing I have *taken* from them, but to the poor, for what I have *kept* from them.

them. Hardness of heart would have been but a common sin, in a common man; but I have been a professor, Doctor, I will not say a hypocrite, for I deceived myself as much as others. But oh! how hollow has my profession been!'

"Here seeing him ready to faint," continued Dr. Barlow, "I imposed silence on him, till he had taken a cordial. This revived him, and he went on.

"'I was miserable in my early course of profligacy. I was disappointed in my subsequent schemes of ambition. I expected more from the world than it had to give. But I continued to love it with all its disappointments. Under whatever new shape it presented its temptations, it was still my idol. I had always loved money; but other passions more turbulent had been hitherto predominant. These I at length renounced. Covetousness now became my reigning sin. Still it was to the broken cistern that I cleaved. Still it was on the broken reed that I leaned. Still I was unhappy. I was at a loss whether

whither to turn for comfort. Of religion I scarcely knew the first principles.

"'In this state I met with a plausible, but ill-informed man. He had zeal and a sort of popular eloquence; but he wanted knowlege, and argument, and soundness. I was, however, struck with his earnestness, and with the importance of some truths which, though common to others, were new to me. But his scheme was hollow and imperfect, and his leading principle subversive of all morality.'

"Here Mr. Tyrrel paused. I intreated him to spare himself; but after a few deep groans he proceeded:

"'Whether his opinions had made *himself* immoral I never enquired. It is certain they were calculated to make his hearers so. Instead of lowering my spiritual disease, by prescribing repentance and humility, he inflamed it by cordials. All was high—all was animating—all was safe! On no better ground than my avowed discontent, he landed me at once in a security

so much the more fatal, as it laid asleep all apprehension. He mistook my uneasiness for a complete change. My talking of sin was made a substitute for my renouncing it. 'Proud of a rich man for a convert, he led me to mistake conviction for conversion. I was buoyed up with an unfounded confidence. I adopted a religion which promised pardon without repentance, happiness without obedience, and heaven without holiness. I had found a short road to peace. I never enquired if it were a false one.'

"The poor man now fell back, unable to speak for some minutes. Then rallying again, he resumed, in a still more broken voice.

"'Here I stopt short. My religion had made no change in my heart, it therefore made none in my life. I read good books, but they were low and fanatical in their language, and antinomian in their principle. But my religious ignorance was so deplorable, that their novelty caught strong hold of me.'

"I now desired him," continued Dr. Barlow, "not to exhaust himself farther. I prayed with him. He was struck with awe at the holy energy in the office for the sick, which was quite new to him. He owned he had not suspected the church to be so evangelical. This is no uncommon error. Hot-headed and superficial men, when they are once alarmed, are rather caught by phrases than sentiments, by terms than principles. It is this ignorance of the doctrines of the Bible and of the church, in which men of the world unhappily live, that makes it so difficult for us to address them under sickness and affliction. We have no common ground on which to stand; no intelligible medium through which to communicate with them. It is having both a language and a science to learn at once."

In the morning Dr. Barlow again visited Mr. Tyrrel. He found him still in great perturbation of mind. Feeling himself quite sensible he had begun to make his will. He had made large bequests to several charities.

Dr.

Dr. Barlow highly approved of this; but reminded him, that though he himself would never recommend charity as a commutation or a bribe, yet some immediate acts of bounty, while there were a possibility of his recovery, would be a better earnestness of his repentance, than the bequeathing his whole estate when it could be of no further use to himself. He was all acquiescence.

He desired to see Mr. Stanley. He recommended to him his nephew, over whose conduct Mr. Stanley promised to have an eye. He made him and Dr. Barlow joint executors. He offered to leave them half his fortune. With their usual disinterestedness they positively refused to accept it, and suggested to him a better mode of bestowing it.

He lifted up his hands and eyes, saying, "This is indeed Christianity—pure and undefiled religion! If it be not faith, it is its fruits. If it be not the procuring cause of salvation, it is one evidence of a safe state. O, Mr. Stanley, our last conversation

versation has sunk deep into my heart. You had begun to pull the veil from my eyes; but nothing tears the whole mask off, like the hand of death, like impending judgment. How little have I considered eternity! Judgment was not in all my thoughts—I had got rid of the terrors of responsibility! O, Dr. Barlow, is there any hope for me?"

"Sir," replied the Doctor, "your sin is not greater because you feel it: so far from it, your danger diminishes in proportion as it is discerned. Your condition is not worse but better, because you are become sensible of your own sins and wants. I judge far more favourably of your state now, than when you thought so well of it. Your sense of the evil of your own heart is the best proof of your sincerity; your repentance towards God, is the best evidence of your faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Doctor, it is too late," replied the sick man. "How can I shew that my repentance is sincere? In this miserable condition how can I glorify God?"

"Sir

"Sir," replied Dr. Barlow, "you must lay anew the whole foundation of your faith. That Saviour whom you had unhappily adopted as a substitute for virtue, must be received as a propitiation for sin. If you recover, you must devote yourself, spirit, soul, and body to his service. You must adorn his gospel by your conduct; you must plead his cause in your conversation; you must recommend his doctrines by your humility: you must dedicate every talent God has given you to his glory. If he continue to visit you with sickness, this will call new and more difficult Christian graces into exercise. If by this severe affliction you lose all ability to do God actual service, you may perhaps glorify him more effectually by casting yourself entirely on him for support, by patient suffering for his sake who suffered every thing for yours. You will have an additional call for trusting in the divine promises; an additional occasion of imitating the divine example; a stronger motive for saying practically, the cup which my father has given me shall I not drink it."

"O, Doctor," said the unhappy man, "my remorse arises not merely from my having neglected this or that moral duty, this or that act of charity, but from the melancholy evidence which that neglect affords that my religion was not sincere."

"I repeat, Sir," said Dr. Barlow, "that your false security and unfounded hope were more alarming than your present distress of mind. Examine your own heart, fear not to probe it to the bottom; it will be a salutary smart. As you are able, I will put you into a course of reading the Scriptures, with a view to promote self-examination. Try yourself by the straight rule they hold out. Pray fervently that the Almighty may assist you by his spirit, and earnestly endeavour to suffer as well as to do his own will."

Dr. Barlow says he thinks there is now as little prospect of his perfect recovery as of his immediate dissolution; but as far as one human creature can judge of the state of another, he believes the visitation will be salutary.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLV.

As we were sitting at supper, after Dr. Barlow had left us, Lady Belfield, turning to me, said, "She had a governess proposed to her from a quarter I should little expect to hear." She then produced a letter, informing her that Mr. Fentham was lately found dead in his bed of an apoplexy; that he had died insolvent; and that his large income ceasing with his life, his family were plunged into the utmost distress. That Mrs. Fentham experienced the most mortifying neglect from her numerous and noble friends, who now, that she could no longer amuse them with balls, concerts, and suppers, revenged themselves by wondering what she could ever mean by giving them at all, and declaring what a bore it had always been to them to go to her parties. They now insisted that people ought to confine themselves to their own station, and

live

live within their income, though they themselves had lifted her above her station, and had led her to exceed her income.

"The poor woman," continued Lady Belfield, "is in extreme distress. Her magnificently furnished house will go but a very little way towards satisfying her creditors. That house, whose clamorous knocker used to keep the neighbourhood awake, is already reduced to utter stillness. The splendid apartments, brilliant with lustres and wax-lights, and crowded with company, are become a frightful solitude, terrifying to those to whom solitude has not one consolation or resource to offer. Poor Mrs. Fentham is more wounded by this total desertion of those whom she so sumptuously entertained, and so obsequiously flattered, than by her actual wants."

"It is," said Sir John, "a fine exemplification of the friendships of the world,

Confederacies in vice, or leagues in pleasure.

"Lady Denham, when applied to," resumed

sumed Lady Belfield, "said, that she was extremely sorry for them; but as she thought extravagance the greatest of all faults, it would look like an encouragement to imprudence if she did any-thing for them. Their extravagance, however, had never been objected to by her, till the fountain which supplied it was stopped; and she had for years made no scruple of winning money almost nightly from the woman whose distresses she now refused to relieve. Lady Denham farther assigned the misery into which the elopement of her darling child with Signor Squallini had brought her, as an additional reason for withholding her kindness from Mrs. Fentham."

"It is a reason," said I, interrupting Lady Belfield, "which in a rightly-turned mind, would have had a directly contrary operation. When domestic calamity overtakes ourselves, is it not the precise moment for holding out a hand to the wretched? for diminishing the misery abroad, which at home may irretrievable?"

"Lady

"Lady Bab Lawless, to whom Mrs. Fentham applied for assistance, coolly advised her to send her daughters to service, saying 'that she knew of no acquirement they had which would be of any use to them, except their skill in hair-dressing."

"It seemed a cruel reproach from a professed friend," said Sir John, "and yet it is a literal truth. I know not what can be done for them, or for what they are fit. Their accomplishments might be turned to some account, if they were accompanied with real knowlege, useful acquirements, or sober habits. Mrs. Fentham wishes us to recommend them as governesses. But can I conscientiously recommend to others, girls with whom I could not trust my own family? Had they been taught to look no higher than the clerks of their father, who had been a clerk himself, they might have been happy; but those very men will now think them as much beneath themselves, as the young ladies lately thought they were above them."

 "I have

"I have often," said Mr. Stanley, "been amused, with observing what a magic transformation the same event produces on two opposite classes of characters. The misfortunes of their acquaintance convert worldly friends into instantaneous strictness of principle. The faults of the distressed are produced as a plea for their own hard-hearted covetousness. While that very misfortune so relaxes the strictness of good men, that the faults are forgotten in the calamity; and they, who had been perpetually warning the prodigal of his impending ruin, when that ruin comes, are the first to relieve him. The worldly friend sees only the errors of the sufferer, the Christian sees only his distress."

It was agreed among us, that some small contribution must be added to a little sum, that had been already raised, for their immediate relief; but that nothing was so difficult, as effectually to serve persons whose views were so disproportioned to their deserts, and whose habits would be

too likely to carry corruption into families who might receive them from charitable motives.

The conversation then fell insensibly on the pleasure we had enjoyed since we had been together; and on the delights of rational society, and confidential intercourse such as ours had been, where minds mingled, and affection and esteem were reciprocal. Mr. Stanley said many things which evinced how happily this piety was combined with the most affectionate tenderness of heart. Indeed I had always been delighted to observe in him, a quality which is not so common as it is thought to be, a thorough capacity for friendship.

"My dear Stanley," said Sir John, "it is of the very essence of human enjoyments, that they must have an end. I observe with regret, that the time assigned for our visit is more than elapsed. We have prolonged it beyond our intention, beyond our convenience: but we have, I trust, been imbibing principles, stealing habits, and borrowing plans,

plans, which will ever make us consider this visit as an important æra in our lives.

"My excellent Caroline is deeply affected with all she has seen and heard at the Grove. We must now leave it, though not without reluctance. We must go and endeavour to imitate what, six weeks ago, we almost feared to contemplate. Lady Belfield and I have compared notes. On the most mature deliberation, we agree that we have lived long enough to the world. We agree that it is time to begin to live to ourselves and to Him who made us. We propose in future to make our winters in London much shorter. We intend to remove early every spring to Beechwood, which we will no longer consider as a temporary residence, but as our home; we will supply it with every thing that may make it interesting, and improving to us all. We are resolved to educate our children in the fear of God. Our fondness for them is rather increased than diminished; but in the exercise of that fondness, we will remember that we are to train them

them for immortality. We will watch over them as creatures for whose eternal well-being a vast responsibility will attach to ourselves.

"In our new plan of life, we shall have fewer sacrifices to make than most people in our situation; for we have long felt a growing indifference for things which we appeared to enjoy. Of the world, we are only going to give up that part which is not worth keeping, and of which we are really weary. In securing our real friends, we shall not regret, if we drop some acquaintance by the way. The wise and the worthy we shall more than ever cherish. In your family, we have enjoyed those true pleasures which entail no repentance. That cheerfulness which alone is worthy of accountable beings, we shall industriously maintain in our own. I bless God if we have not so many steps to tread back, as some others have, who are entering upon principle, on a new course of life.

"We have always endeavoured, though with much imperfection, to fill some duties

to each other, to our children, to our friends, and to the poor. But of the prime duty, the main spring of action and of all moral goodness, duty to God, we have not been sufficiently mindful. I hope we have at length learnt to consider Him as the fountain of all good, and the gospel of his Son, as the fountain of all hope. This new principle, I am persuaded, will never impair our cheerfulness, it will only fix it on a solid ground. By purifying the motive it will raise the enjoyment.

"But if we have not so many bad habits to correct as poor Carlton had, I question if we have not as many difficulties to meet in another way. His loose course was discreditable. His vices made him stand ill with the world. He would therefore acquire nothing but credit in changing his outward practice: Lady Belfield and I, on the contrary, stand rather too well with the world. We had just that external regularity, that cool indifference about our own spiritual improvement, and the wrong

courses

courses of our friends, which procure regard, because they do not interfere with others, nor excite jealousy for ourselves. But we have now to encounter that censure, which we have perhaps hitherto been too solicitous to avoid. It will still be our trial, but I humbly trust that it will be no longer our snare. Our morality pleased, because it seemed to proceed merely from a sense of propriety; our strictness will offend, when it is found to spring from a principle of religion.

"To what tendency in the heart of man, my dear Stanley, is it owing, that religion is commonly seen to excite more suspicion than the want of it? When a man of the world meets with a gay, thoughtless, amusing person, he seldom thinks of inquiring whether such a one be immoral, or an unbeliever, or a profligate, though the bent of his conversation rather leans that way. Satisfied with what he finds him, he feels little solicitude to ascertain what he really is. But no sooner does actual piety

shew itself in any man, than your friends are putting you on your guard;—there is instantly a suggestion, a hint, a suspicion. "Does he not carry things too far?" "Is he not righteous over much?" "Is he not intemperate in his zeal?" "Above all things is he *sincere?*" and in short—for that is the centre in which all the lines of suspicion and reprobation meet, "*Is he not a Methodist?*"

"I trust, however, that, through divine grace, our minds will be fortified against all attacks on this our weak side: this pass through which the sort of assaults most formidable to *us* will be likely to enter. I was mentioning this danger to Caroline this morning. She opened her Bible, over which she now spends much of her solitary time, and with an emphasis foreign from her usual manner read,

"Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

As Sir John repeated these words, I saw

Lucilla,

Lucilla, who was sitting next Lady Belfield, snatch one of her hands and kiss it, with a rapture which she had no power to control. It was evident that nothing but our presence restrained her from rising to embrace her friend. Her fine eyes glistened, but seeing that I observed her, she gently let go the hand she held, and tried to look composed. I cannot describe the chastised, but not less fervent joy of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley. Their looks expressed the affectionate interest they took in Sir John's honest declaration. Their hearts overflowed with gratitude to Him, without whom "nothing is strong, nothing is holy." For my own part, I felt myself raised

Above this visible diurnal sphere.

Sir John afterwards said, "I begin more and more to perceive the scantiness of all morality which has not the love of God for its motive. *That* virtue will not carry us safely, and will not carry us far, which looks to human estimation as its reward. As it was a false and inadequate principle which first

set it a going, it will always stop short of the true ends of goodness. Do not think, my dear Stanley," continued he, "that I fancy it is only our habits which want improving. Dr. Barlow has convinced me that there must be *a mutation of the whole man:* that the change in our practice must grow out of a new motive; not merely out of an amended prnciple, but a new principle; not an improvement in some particulars, but a general determining change."

"My dear Belfield," replied Mr. Stanley, "all information short of this, though it may obtain credit, brings neither peace nor acceptance. This change shews itself, gradually perhaps but unequivocally, by enlightening the understanding, awakening the conscience, purifying the affections, subduing the will, reforming the life."

Lady Belfield expressed, with a sweet humility, her deep conviction of the truth of these remarks. After some farther discussion, she said, "Sir John, I have been seriously thinking that I ought not to indulge in the expence of this intended conserva-

tory. We will, if you please, convert the money to the building a charity-school. I cannot consent to incur such a superfluous expence merely for my amusement."

"My dear Caroline," replied Sir John, "through the undeserved goodness of God, my estate is so large, and through your excellent management it is so unimpaired, that we will not give up the conservatory, unless Mr. Stanley thinks we ought to give it up. But we will adopt Lucilla's idea of combining a charity with an indulgence—we will associate the charity-school with the conservatory. This union will be a kind of monument to our friends at the Grove, from whom you have acquired the love of plants, and I of religious charity."

We all looked with anxious expectation at Mr. Stanley. He gave it as his opinion, that as Lady Belfield was now resolved to live the greater part of the year in the country, she ought to have some amusement in lieu of those she was going to give

up. "Costly decorations and expensive gardens," continued he, "at a place where the proprietors do not so much as *intend* to reside, have always appeared to me among the infatuations of opulence. To the expences which they do not *want*, it is adding an expence which they do not *see*. But surely, at a mansion where an affluent family actually live, all reasonable indulgences should be allowed. And where a garden and greenhouse are to supply to the proprietor, the place of the abdicated theatre and ball-room; and especially when it is to be a means in her hands of attaching her children to the country, and of teaching them to love home, I declare myself in favour of the conservatory."

Lucilla's eyes sparkled, but she said nothing.

"It would be unfair," continued Mr. Stanley, "to blame too severely those, who, living constantly in the country, give a little into its appropriate pleasures. The real objects of censure seem to be those

who, grafting bad taste on bad habits, bring into the country the amusements of the town, and super add to such as are local, and natural, and innocent, such as are foreign, artificial, and corrupt."

"My dear Stanley," said Sir John, "we have resolved to indemnify our poor neighbours for two injuries which we have been doing them. The one is, by our having lived so little among them: for I have now learnt, that the mere act of residence is a kind of charity even in the uncharitable, as it necessarily causes much money to be spent, even where little is given. The other is, that we will endeavour to make up for our past indifference to their spiritual concerns, by now acting as if we were aware that the poor have souls as well as bodies, and that, in the great day of account, the care of both will attach to our responsibility."

Such a sense of sober joy seemed to pervade our little party, that we were not aware that the night was far advanced. Our minds

minds were too highly wrought for much loquacity, when Phœbe suddenly exclaimed, "Papa, why is it that happiness does not make one merry? I never was half so happy in my life, and yet I can hardly forbear crying; and I believe it is catching, Sir, for look, Lucilla is not much wiser than myself."

The next day but one after this conversation our valuable friends left us. Our separation was softened by the prospect of a speedy meeting. The day before they set out, Lady Belfield made an earnest request to Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, that they would have the goodness to receive Fanny Stokes into their family for a few months, previous to her entering theirs as governess. "I can think of no method so likely," continued she, "to raise the tone of education in my own family, as the transfusion into it of your spirit, and the adoption of your regulations." Mr. and Mrs. Stanley most cheerfully acceded to the proposal.

Sir

Sir John said, "I was meditating the same request, but with an additional clause tacked to it, that of sending our eldest girl with Fanny, that the child also may get imbued with something of your family spirit, and be broken into better habits than she has acquired from our hitherto relaxed discipline." This proposal was also cordially approved.

CHAP. XLVI.

Dr. Barlow came to the Grove to take leave of our friends. He found Sir John and I sitting in the library with Mr. Stanley." "As I came from Mr. Tyrrel's," said the Doctor, "I met Mr. Flam going to see him. He seemed so anxious about his old friend, that a wish strongly presented itself to my mind that the awful situation of the sick man might be salutary to him.

"It is impossible to say," continued he, "what injury religion has suffered from the opposite characters of these two men. Flam, who gives himself no concern about the matter, is kind and generous; while Tyrrel, who has made a high profession, is mean and sordid. It has been said, of what use is religion, when morality has made Mr. Flam a better man than religion makes Mr. Tyrrel? Thus men of the world reason! But

But nothing can be more false than their conclusions. Flam is naturally an open, warm-hearted man, but incorrect in many respects, and rather loose in his principles. His natural good propensities religion would have improved into solid virtues, and would have cured the more exceptionable parts of his character. But from religion he stands aloof.

"Tyrrel is naturally narrow and selfish. Religion has not made, but found him such. But what a religion has he adopted! A mere assumption of terms; a dead, inoperative, uninfluencing notion, which he has taken up; not, I hope, with a view to deceive others, but by which he has grossly deceived himself. He had heard that religion was a cure for an uneasy mind; but he did not attend to the means by which the cure is effected, and it relieved not him.

"The corrupt principle whence his vices proceeded was not subdued. He did not desire to subdue it, because in the struggle he must have parted with what he was resolved

solved to keep. He adopted what he believed was a cheap and easy religion; little aware that the great fundamental scripture doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ was a doctrine powerfully opposing our corruptions, and involving in its comprehensive requirements a new heart and a new life."

At this moment Mr. Flam called at the Grove. "I am just come from Tyrrel," said he. "I fear it is nearly over with him. Poor Ned! he is very low, almost in despair. I always told him that the time would come when he would be glad to exchange notions for actions. I am grieved for him. The remembrance of a kind deed or two done to a poor tenant would be some comfort to him, now at a time when every man stands in need of comfort."

"Sir," said Dr. Barlow, "the scene which I have lately witnessed at Mr. Tyrrel's makes me serious. If you and I were alone, I am afraid it would make me bold. I will, however, suppress the answer I was tempted to make you, because I should not think it prudent

prudent or respectful to utter before company what, I am persuaded, your good sense would permit me to say were we alone!"

"Doctor," replied the good-tempered, but thoughtless man, "don't stand upon ceremony. You know I love a debate, and I insist on your saying what was in your mind to say. I don't fear getting out of any scrape you can bring me into. You are too well-bred to offend, and, I hope, I am too well-natured to be easily offended. Stanley, I know, always takes your side. Sir John, I trust, will take mine, and so will the young man here, if he is like most other young men."

"Allow me then to observe," returned Dr. Barlow, "that if Mr. Tyrrel has unhappily deceived himself, by resting too exclusively on a mere speculative faith; a faith which by his conduct did not evince itself to be of the right sort; yet, on the other hand, a dependence for salvation on our own benevolence, our own integrity, or any other good quality we may possess, is an error

not

not less fatal, and far more usual. Such a dependence does as practically set at nought the Redeemer's sacrifice as the avowed rejection of the infidel. Honesty and benevolence are among the noblest qualities; but where the one is practised for reputation, and the other from mere feeling, they are sadly delusive as to the ends of practical goodness. They have both indeed their reward: integrity in the credit it brings, and benevolence in the pleasure it yields. Both are beneficial to society? both therefore are politically valuable. Both sometimes lead me to admire the ordinations of that over-ruling power which often uses as instruments of public good, men who acting well in many respects are essentially useful to others; but who, acting from motives merely human, forfeit for themselves that high reward which those virtues would obtain, if they were evidences of a lively faith, and the results of Christian principle. Think me not severe, Mr. Flam. To be personal is always extremely painful to me."

"No,

"No, no, Doctor," replied he, "I know you mean well. 'Tis your trade to give good counsel; and your lot, I suppose, to have it seldom followed. I shall hear you without being angry. You in your turn must not be angry, if I hear you without being better."

"I respect you, Sir, too much," replied Dr. Barlow, "to deceive you in a matter of such infinite importance. For one man who errs on Mr. Tyrrel's principle, a hundred err on yours. His mistake is equally pernicious, but it is not equally common. I must repeat it. For one whose soul is endangered through an unwarranted dependence on the Saviour, multitudes are destroyed not only by the open rejection, but through a fatal neglect of the salvation wrought by him. Many more perish through a presumptuous confidence in their own merits, than through an unscriptural trust in the merits of Christ."

"Well, Doctor," replied Mr. Flam, "I must say, that I think an ounce of morality

will

will go farther towards making up my accounts, than a ton of religion, for which no one but myself would be the better."

"My dear Sir," said Dr. Barlow, "I will not presume to determine between the exact comparative proportions of two ingredients, both of which are so indispensable in the composition of a Christian. I dare not hazard the assertion, which of the two is the most perilous state, but I think I am justified in saying which of the two cases occurs most frequently."

Mr. Flam said, "I should be sorry, Dr. Barlow, to find out at this time of day, that I have been all my life long in an error."

"Believe me, Sir," said Dr. Barlow, "it is better to find it out now, than at a still later period. "One good quality can never be made to supply the absence of another. There are no substitutes in this warfare. Nor can all the good qualities put together, if we could suppose them to unite in one man, and to exist without religion, stand proxy for the death of Christ. If they could

so exist, it would be in the degree only, and not in the perfection required by that law which said, *do this and live*. So kind a neighbour as you are, so honest a gentleman, so generous a master, as you are allowed to be, I cannot, Sir, think without pain of your losing the reward of such valuable qualities, by your placing your hope of eternal happiness in the exercise of them. Believe me, Mr. Flam, it is easier for a compassionate man, if he be not religious, to "give all his goods to the poor," than to bring every thought, "nay than to bring *any* thought" into captivity to the obedience of Christ! But be assured, if we give ever so much with our hands, while we withhold our hearts from God, though we may do much good to others, we do none to ourselves."

"Why surely," said Mr. Flam, "you don't mean to insinuate that I should be in a safer state if I never did a kind thing?"

"Quite the contrary," replied Dr. Barlow, "but I could wish to see your good

actions

actions exalted, by springing from a higher principle, I mean the love of God; ennobled by being practised to a higher end, and purified by your renouncing all self-complacency in the performance."

"But is there not less danger, Sir," said Mr. Flam, "in being somewhat proud of what one really *does*, than in doing nothing? And is it not more excuseable to be a little satisfied with what one really *is*, than in hypocritically pretending to be what one *is not*?"

"I must repeat," returned Dr. Barlow, "that I cannot exactly decide on the question of relative enormity between two opposite sins. I cannot pronounce which is the best of two states so very bad."

"Why now, Doctor," said Mr. Flam, "what particular sin can you charge me with?"

"I erect not myself into an accuser," replied Dr. Barlow; "but permit me to ask you, Sir, from what motive is it that you avoid any wrong practice? Is there any one

sin

sin from which you abstain through the fear of offending your Maker?"

"As to that," replied Mr. Flam, "I can't say I ever consider about the motive of the thing. I thought it was quite enough not to do it. Well but, Doctor, since we are gone so far in the catechism, what duty to my neighbour can you convict me of omitting?"

"It will be well, Sir," said the Doctor, "if you can indeed stand so close a scrutiny, as that to which you challenge me, even on your own principles. But tell me with that frank honesty which marks your character, does your kindness to your neighbour spring from the true fountain, the love of God? That you do many right things I am most willing to allow. But do you perform them from a sense of obedience to the law of your maker? Do you perform them because they are commanded in his word, and conformable to his will?"

"I can't say I do," said Mr. Flam, "but

if the thing be right in itself, that appears to me to be all in all. It seems hard to encumber a man of business like me with the action and the motive too. Surely if I serve a man, it can make no difference to him, *why* I serve him."

"To yourself, my dear Sir," said the Doctor, "it makes all the difference in the world. Besides, good actions, performed on any other principle than obedience, are not only spurious as to their birth, but they are defective in themselves; they commonly want something in weight and measure."

"Why, Doctor," said Mr. Flam, "I have often heard you say in the pulpit that the best are not perfect. Now, as this is the case, I will tell you how I manage. I think it a safe way to average one's good qualities, to throw a bad one against a good one, and if the balance sinks on the right side, the man is safe."

Doctor Barlow shook his head, and was beginning to express his regret at such delusive casuistry, when Mr. Flam interrupted him

him by saying, "Well, Doctor, my great care in life has been to avoid all suspicion of hypocrisy."

"You cannot do better," replied Dr. Barlow, "than to avoid its *reality*. But, for my own part, I believe religious hypocrisy to be rather a rare vice among persons of your station in life. Among the vulgar, indeed, I fear it is not so rare. In neighbourhoods where there is much real piety, there is no small danger of some false profession. But among the higher classes of society, serious religion confers so little credit on him who professes it, that a gentleman is not likely to put on appearances from which he knows he is far more likely to lose reputation than to acquire it. When such a man therefore, assumes the character of piety, I own I always feel disposed to give him full credit for possessing it. His religion may indeed be mistaken; it may be defective; it may even be unsound; but the chances are very much in favour of its not being insincere. Where piety is genu-

 ine,

ine, it cannot be altogether concealed. Where 'the fruits of the spirit abound, they will appear.'"

"Now, my dear Doctor," replied Mr. Flam, "is not that cant? What do you mean by the fruits of the spirit? Would it not have been more worthy of your good sense to have said morality or virtue? Would not these terms have been more simple and intelligible?"

"They might be so," rejoined the Doctor, "but they would not rise quite so high. They would not take in my *whole* meaning. The fruit of the spirit indeed always includes *your* meaning, but it includes much more. It is something higher than worldly morality, something holier than mere human virtue. I rather conceive morality, in your sense, to be the effect of natural temper, natural conscience, or worldly prudence, or perhaps a combination of all three. The fruit of the spirit is the morality of the renewed heart. Worldly morality is easily satisfied with itself. It sits down contented with

with its own meagre performances—with legal honesty, with bare weight justice. It seldom gives a particle 'that is not in the bond.' It is always making out its claim to doubtful indulgences; it litigates its right to every inch of contested enjoyment; and is so fearful of not getting enough, that it commonly takes more than its due. It is one of the cases where 'the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.'

"It obtains, however, its worldly reward. It procures a good degree of respect and commendation; but it is not attended by the silent train of the Christian graces, with that 'joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,' which are the fruits of the spirit, and the evidences of a Christian. These graces are calculated to adorn all that is right with all that is amiable, 'whatsoever things are honest and just,' with 'whatsoever things are lovely and of good report.' And, to crown all, they add the deepest humility, and most unfeigned self-abasement to the most correct course of con-

 duct:

duct: a course of conduct which, though a Christian never thinks himself at liberty to neglect, he never feels himself permitted or disposed to be proud of!"

"Well well, Doctor," said Mr. Flam, "I never denied the truth of Christianity, as Carlton formerly did. 'Tis the religion of the country by law established. And I often go to church, because that too is established by law, for which you know I have a great veneration. 'Tis the religion of my ancestors, I like it for that too."

"But, Sir," said the Doctor, "would you not shew your veneration for the church more fully, if you attended it twice instead of once? And your veneration for the law, if, instead of going sometimes, you went every Sunday, which you know both the law of God and man enjoins?"

"Why, unluckily," returned Mr. Flam, "the hour of service interferes with that of dinner."

"Sir," said Dr. Barlow, smiling, "hours are so altered, that I believe if the church were

were to new model the calendar, she would say that dinners ought to be placed among the *moveable feasts*. An hour earlier or later would accommodate the difference, liberate your servants, and enable you to do a thing right in itself, and beneficial in its example."

Mr. Flam not being prepared with an answer, went on with this confession of faith. "Doctor," said he, "I am a better Christian than you think. I take it for granted that the Bible is true, for I have heard many men say who examine for themselves, which I cannot say I have ever had time or inclination to do, that no opposer has ever yet refuted the scripture account of miracles and prophecies. So if you don't call this being a good Christian, I don't know what is."

Dr. Barlow replied, "Nothing can be better as far as it goes. But allow me to say, that there is another kind of evidence of the truth of our religion, which is peculiar to the real Christian. I mean that evidence which arises from his individual con-

viction of the efficacy of Christianity in remedying the disorders of his own nature. He who has had his own temper improved, his evil propensities subdued, and, his whole character formed anew, by being cast into the mould of Christianity, will have little doubt of the truth of a religion which has produced such obvious effects in himself. The truths for which his reason pleads, and in which his understanding, after much examination, is able to rest, having had a purifying influence on his heart, become established principles, producing in him at the same time holiness of life and peace of conscience. The stronger evidence a man has of his own internal improvement, the stronger will be his conviction of the truth of the religion he professes."

"There are worse men than I am, Doctor," said Mr. Flam, rather seriously.

"Sir," replied he, "I heartily wish every gentleman had your good qualities. But as we shall be judged positively and not comparatively; as our characters will be finally decided upon, not by our superiority to other men,

men, nor merely by our inferiority to the divine rule, but by our departure from it, I wish you would begin to square your life by that rule now; which, in order that you may do, you should begin to study it. While we live in a total neglect of the Bible, we must not talk of our deficiencies, our failings, our imperfections, as if these alone stood between us and the mercy of God. That indeed is the language and the state of the devout Christian. Stronger terms must be used to express the alienation of heart of those, who, living in the avowed neglect of scripture, may be said, forgive me, Sir, 'to live without God in the world.' Ignorance is no plea in a gentleman. In a land of light and knowlege ignorance itself is a sin."

Here Dr. Barlow, being silent, and Mr. Flam not being prepared to answer, Mr. Stanley said, "That the pure and virtuous dispositions which arise out of a sincere belief of Christianity, are not more frequently seen in persons professing themselves to be Christians, is, unhappily, one of the strongest argu-

ments against us that can be urged by unbelievers. Instances, however, occur, which are too plain to be denied, of individuals who, having been led by divine grace cordially to receive Christianity, have exhibited in their conduct a very striking proof of its excellence; and among these are some who like our friend Carlton, had previously led very corrupt lives. The ordinary class of Christians, who indeed scarcely deserve the name, as well as sceptics and unbelievers, would do well to mark the lives of the truly religious, and to consider them as furnishing a proof which will come powerfully in aid of that body of testimony with which Christianity is intrenched on all sides. And these observers should remember, that, though they themselves may not yet possess that best evidence in favour of Christianity, which arises from an inward sense of its purifying nature, they may nevertheless aspire after it; and those who have any remaining doubts should encourage themselves with the hope, that if they fully yield themselves to the doctrines

and

and precepts of the gospel, a salutary change will in time be effected in their own hearts, which will furnish them with irresistible evidence of its truth."

I could easily perceive, that though Mr. Stanley and Dr. Barlow entertained small hopes of the beneficial effect of their discourse on the person to whom it was directed, yet they prolonged it with an eye to Sir John Belfield, who sat profoundly attentive and encouraged them by his looks.

As to Mr. Flam, it was amusing to observe the variety of his motions, gestures, and contortions, and the pains he took to appear easy and indifferent, and even victorious: sometimes fixing the end of his whip on the floor, and whirling it round at full speed: then working it into his boot: then making up his mouth for a whistle, but stopping short to avoid being guilty of the incivility of interruption.

At length with the same invincible good nature, and with the same pitiable insensibility to his own state, he arose to take leave.

 He

He shook us all by the hand, Dr. Barlow twice, saying, "Doctor, I don't think the worse of you for your plain speaking. He is a knave or a fool that is angry with a good man for doing his duty. 'Tis my fault if I don't take his advice: but 'tis his fault if he does not give it. Parsons are paid for it, and ought not to be mealy mouthed, when there is a proper opening, such as poor Tyrrel's case gave you. I challenged *you*. I should perhaps have been angry if you had challenged *me*. It makes all the difference in the event of a duel which is the challenger. As to myself, it is time enough for me to think of the things you recommend. Thank God, I am in excellent good health and spirits, and am not yet quite fifty. 'There is a time for all things.' Even the Bible allows that."

The Doctor shook his head at this sad misapplication of the text. Mr. Flam went away, pressing us all to dine with him next day: he had killed a fine buck, and he assured Dr. Barlow that he should

have the best port in his cellar. The Doctor pleaded want of time, and the rest of the party could not afford a day out of the few which remained to us: but we promised to call on him. He nodded kindly at Dr. Barlow, saying, "Well, Doctor, as you won't come to the buck, one of his haunches shall come to you; so tell Madam to expect it."

As soon as he had left the room, we all joined in lamenting that the blessings of health and strength should ever be produced as arguments for neglecting to secure those blessings which have eternity for their object.

"Unhappy man!" said Dr. Barlow, "little does he think that he is, if possible, more the object of my compassion than poor Mr. Tyrrel. Tyrrel, it is true, is lying on a sick, probably a dying bed. His body is in torture. His mind is in anguish. He has to look back on a life, the retrospect of which can afford him no ray of comfort. But he *knows* his misery. The hand of God is upon him. His proud heart is brought

low.

low. His self-confidence is subdued. His high imaginations are cast down. His abasement of soul, as far as I can judge, is sincere. He abhors himself in dust and ashes. He sees death at hand. He feels that the sting of death is sin. All subterfuge is at an end. He is at last seeking the only refuge of penitent sinners, I trust on right grounds. His state is indeed perilous in the extreme: yet awful as it is, he *knows* it. He will not open his eyes on the eternal world in a state of delusion. But what shall awaken poor Mr. Flam from his dream of security? His high health, his unbroken spirits, his prosperous circumstances and various blessings, are so many snares to him. He thinks that, 'to-morrow shall be as this day, and still more abundant.' Even the wretched situation of his dying friend, though it awakens compassion, awakens not compunction. Nay, it affords matter of triumph rather than of humiliation. He feeds his vanity with comparisons from which he contrives to extract comfort. His own offences being of a dif-

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ferent kind, instead of lamenting them, he glories in being free from those which belong to an opposite cast of character. Satisfied that he has not the vices of Tyrrel, he never once reflects on his own unrepented sins. Even his good qualities increase his danger. He wraps himself up in that constitutional good nature, which, being partly founded on vanity and self-approbation, strengthens his delusion, and hardens him against reproof."

CHAP. XLVII.

In conversing with Mr. Stanley on my happy prospects and my future plans, after having referred all concerns of a pecuniary nature to be settled between him and Sir John Belfield, I ventured to entreat that he would crown his goodness, and my happiness, by allowing me to solicit his daughter for an early day.

Mr. Stanley said, the term *early* was relative; but he was afraid that he should hardly consent to what I might consider even as a late one. "In parting with such a child as Lucilla," added he, "some weaning time must be allowed to the tenderest of mothers. The most promising marriage, and surely none can promise more happiness than that to which we are looking, is a heavy trial to fond parents. To have trained a creature with anxious fondness,

fondness, in hope of her repaying their solicitude hereafter by the charms of her society, and then as soon as she becomes capable of being a friend and companion, to lose her for ever, is such a trial that I sometimes wonder at the seeming impatience of parents to get rid of a treasure, of which they best know the value. The sadness which attends the consummation even of our dearest hopes on these occasions, is a striking instance of that *vanity of human wishes*, on which Juvenal and Johnson have so beautifully expatiated.

"A little delay indeed I shall require, from motives of prudence as well as fondness. Lucilla will not be nineteen these three months and more. You will not, I trust, think me unreasonable if I say, that neither her mother nor myself can consent to part with her before that period."

"Three months!" exclaimed I, with more vehemence than politeness.—"Three months! It is impossible."

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"It is very possible" said he, smiling, "that you can wait; and very certain that we shall not consent sooner."

"Have you any doubts, Sir," said I, "have you any objections which I can remove, and which, being removed, may abridge this long probation?"

"None," said he, kindly. "But I consider even nineteen as a very early age; too early indeed, were not my mind so completely at rest about you on the grand points of religion, morals, and temper, that no delay could, I trust, afford me additional security. You will, however, my dear Charles, find so much occupation in preparing your affairs, and your mind, for so important a change, that you will not find the time of absence so irksome as you fancy."

"Absence, Sir," replied I. "What then, do you intend to banish me?"

"No," replied he, smiling again. "But I intend to send you *home*. A sentence indeed, which in this dissipated age is thought

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the worst sort of exile. You have now been absent six or seven months. This absence has been hitherto justifiable. It is time to return to your affairs, to your duties. Both the one and the other always slide into some disorder by a too long separation from the place of their legitimate exercise. Your steward will want inspection, your tenants may want redress, your poor always want assistance."

Seeing me look irresolute, "I must, I find," added he with the kindest look and voice, "be compelled to the inhospitable necessity of turning you out of doors."

"Live without Lucilla three months!" said I. "Allow me, Sir, at least to remain a few weeks longer at the Grove."

"Love is a bad calculator," replied Mr. Stanley. "I believe he never learnt arithmetic. Don't you know that as you are enjoined a three months banishment, that the sooner you go, the sooner you will return? And that however long your stay now is, your three months' absence will still

remain

remain to be accomplished? To speak seriously; Lucilla's sense of propriety, as well as that of Mrs. Stanley, will not permit you to remain much longer under the same roof, now that the motive will become so notorious. Besides that an act of self denial is a good principle to set out upon, business and duties will fill up your active hours, and an intercourse of letters with her you so reluctantly quit, will not only give an interest to your leisure, but put you both still more completely in possession of each other's character."

"I will set out to-morrow, Sir," said I, earnestly, "in order to begin to hasten the day of my return."

"Now you are as much too precipitate on the other side," replied he. "A few days, I think, may be permitted, without any offence to Lucilla's delicacy. This even her mother pleads for."

"With what excellence will this blessed union give me an alliance!" replied I; "I will

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go directly, and thank Mrs. Stanley for this goodness."

I found Mrs. Stanley and her daughter together, with whom I had a long and interesting conversation. They took no small pains to convince my judgment, that my departure was perfectly proper. My will, however continued rebellious. But as I had been long trained to the habit of submitting my will to my reason, I acquiesced, though not without murmuring, and, as they told me, with a very bad grace.

I informed Mrs. Stanley of an intimation I had received from Sir George Aston of his attachment to Phœbe, and of his mother's warm approbation of his choice, adding that he alleged her extreme youth, as the ground of his deferring to express his hope, that his plea might one day be received with favour.

"He forgot to allege his own youth," replied she, "which is a reason almost equally cogent."

Miss Stanley and I agreed that a connection

tion more desirable in all respects could not be expected.

"When I assure you," replied Mrs. Stanley, "that I am quite of your opinion; you will think me inconsistent if I add that I earnestly hope such a proposal will not be made by Sir George, lest his precipitancy should hinder the future accomplishment of a wish, which I may be allowed remotely to indulge."

"What objection," said I, "can Mr. Stanley possibly make to such a proposal, except that his daughter is too young?"

"I see," replied she, "that you do not yet completely know Mr. Stanley: or rather you do not know all that he has done for the Aston family. His services have been very important, not only in that grand point which you and I think the most momentous, but he has also very successfully exerted himself in settling Lady Aston's worldly affairs, which were in the utmost disorder. The large estate, which had suffered by her own ignorance of business, and the dishonesty

nesty of a steward, he has not only enabled her to clear, but put her in the way greatly to improve. This skill and kindness in worldly things so raised his credit in the eyes of the guardian, young Sir George's uncle, that he declared he should never again be so much afraid of religious men; whom he had always understood to be without judgment, or kindness, or disinterestedness.

"Now," added Mrs. Stanley, "don't you perceive that not only the purity of Mr. Stanley's motives, but religion itself would suffer, should we be forward to promote this connection? Will not this Mr. Aston say, that sinister designs influenced all this zeal and kindness, and that Sir George's estate was improved with an eye to his own daughter? It will be said that these religious people always know what they are about—that when they seem to be purely serving God, they are resolved not to serve him for nothing, but always keep their own interest in view. Should Sir George's inclination continue, and his principles stand

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the siege which the world will not fail to lay to a man of his fortune—some years hence, when he is complete master of his actions, his character formed, and his judgment ripened to direct his choice, so as to make it evident to the world, that it was not the effect of influence—this connection is an event to which we should look forward with much pleasure."

"Never," exclaimed I, "no not once, have I been disappointed in my expectation of consistency in Mr. Stanley's character. O my beloved parents, how wise was your injunction that I should make *consistency the test of true piety!* It is thus that Christians should always keep the credit of religion in view, if they would promote its interests in the world."

When I communicated to Miss Stanley my conversation with *her* father, and read over with her the letters of *mine*, how tenderly did she weep! How were my own feelings renewed! To be thus assured that she was selected for their son by my deceased parents,

parents, seemed, to her pious mind, to shed a sacredness on our union. How did she venerate their virtues! How feelingly regret their loss!

Before I left the country, I did not omit a visit of civility to Mr. Flam. The young ladies, as Sir John had predicted, had stept back into their natural character, and natural undress; though he was too severe when he added, that their hopes in assuming the other were now at an end.

They both asked me, if I was not moped to death at the Grove: the Stanleys, they said, were *good sort* of people, but quite *mauvais ton*, as every body must be who did not spend half the year in London. Miss Stanley was a fine girl enough, but knew nothing of the world, wanted manners, which two or three winters in town would give her. "Better as she is," interrupted Mr. Flam, "better as she is. She is a pattern daughter, and will make a pattern wife. *Her* mother has no care, nor trouble; I wish I could say as much of all mothers. I never saw a bad humour, or a bad dinner in

the house. She is always at home, always employed, always in spirits, and always in temper. She is as cheerful as if she had no religion, and as useful as if she could not spell her own receipt book."

I was affected with this generous tribute to my Lucilla's virtues: and when he wished me joy, as he cordially shook me by the hand, I could not forbear saying to myself, why will not this good-natured man go to heaven?

I next paid a farewell visit to Mr. and Mrs. Carlton, to the amiable family at Aston Hall, and to Dr. Barlow. How rich has this excursion made me in valuable friendships; to say nothing of the inestimable connexion at the Grove! I did not forget to assure Doctor Barlow, that if any thing could add a value to the blessing which awaited me, it was, that his hand would consecrate it.

Through the good Doctor I received a message from Mr. Tyrrel, requesting me to make him a visit of charity before I quitted the neighbourhood. I instantly obeyed the summons.

summons. I found him totally changed in all respects, a body wasted by disease, a mind apparently full of contrition, and penetrated with that deep humility, in which he had been so eminently deficient.

He earnestly intreated my prayers, adding, "though it is presumption in so unworthy a being as I am to suppose his intercession may be heard, I will pray for a blessing on your happy prospects. A connexion with such a family is itself a blessing. Oh! that my nephew had been worthy of it! It is to recommend that poor youth to your friendship, that I invited you to this melancholy visit. I call him poor, because I have neglected to enrich his mind: but he will have too much of this world's goods. May he employ well what I have risked my soul to amass? Counsel him, dear Sir; admonish him. Recal to his mind his dying uncle. I would now give my whole estate, nay, I would live upon the alms I have refused, to purchase one more year, though spent in pain and misery, that I

might prove the sincerity of my repentance. Be to Ned what my blessed friend Stanley would have been to me.' But my pride repelled his kindness. I could not bear his superiority. I turned away my eyes from a model I could not imitate." I now entreated him to spare himself, but after a few minutes pause he proceeded.

"As to Ned, I trust he is not ill-disposed, but I have neither furnished his mind for solitude, nor fortified his heart for the world. I foolishly thought that to keep him ignorant, was to keep him safe. I have provided for him the share of a large fortune, without preparing him for the use of it. I fell into an error not uncommon, that of grudging the expences of education to a relation for whom I designed my estate. I have thus fitted him for a companion to the vulgar, and a prey to the designing. I thought it sufficient to keep him from actual vice, without furnishing him with arguments to combat it, or with principles to abhor it."

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Here the poor man paused for want of breath. I was too much affected to speak. At length he went on. "I have made over to Dr. Barlow's son two thousand pounds for completing his education. I have also given two thousand pounds a piece to the two eldest daughters of Mr. Stanley in aid of their charities. I have made a deed of gift of this, and of a large sum for charitable purposes at the discretion of my executors. This I hoped would prove my sincerity more than a legacy, as it will be paid immediately. A refusal to accept it, will greatly distress me. Ned still will have too much left, unless he employs it to better purposes than I have done."

Though deeply moved, I hardly knew what to reply. I wished to give him comfort, but distrusted my own judgment as to the manner. I promised my best services to his nephew.

"O good young man," cried he, "if ever you are tempted to forget God, as I did, by an outward profession as I have lately done,

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think of me; think of one who, for the largest portion of his life, lived as if there were no God; and who, since he has made a profession of Christianity, deceived his own soul, no less by the religion he adopted, than by his former neglect of all religion. My delusion was this, I did not chuse to be good, but chose to be saved. It was no wonder then that I should be struck with a religion, which I hoped would free me from the discipline of moral rectitude, and yet deliver me from the punishment of having neglected it. Will God accept my present forced submission? Will he accept a penitence of which I may have no time to prove the sincerity? Tell me—You are a Christian."

I was much distressed. I thought it neither modest nor prudent for me to give a decisive answer. He grasped my hand. "Then," said he, "you think my case hopeless. You think the Almighty cannot forgive me." Thus pressed, I ventured to say, "to doubt his will to pardon, and

and his power to save, would, as it appears to me, Sir, be a greater fault than any you have committed."

"One great comfort is left," replied he; "the mercy I have abused is infinite. Tell Stanley I now believe with him, that if we pretend to trust in God, we must be governed by him; if we truly believe in him, we shall obey him; if we think he sent his son to save sinners, we shall hate sin."

I ventured to congratulate him on his frame of mind; and seeing him quite overcome, took leave of him with a heart deeply touched with this salutary scene. The family at the Grove were greatly moved with my description, and with the method poor Tyrrel had found out of eluding the refusal of his liberal-minded executors to accept of legacies.

The day fixed for my departure too soon arrived. I took a most affectionate leave of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, and a very tender one of Lucilla, who gratified my affection by the emotion she evidently felt; and my-

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delicacy by the effort she made to conceal it. Phœbe wept outright. The children all hung about me, each presenting me some of her flowers, saying they had nothing else to give me; and assuring me that Rachel should be no loser by it. Little Celia was clamorous in her sorrow, when she saw me ascend the curricle, in which neither she nor Lucilla was to have a place. I took the sweet child up into the carriage, placed her by me, and gently drove her through the park, at the gate of which I consigned her to the arms of her father, who had good-naturedly walked by the side of the carriage in order to carry her back. I drove off, enriched with his prayers and blessings, which seemed to insure me protection.

Though this separation from all I loved threw a transient sadness around me, I had abundant matter for delightful reflection and pious gratitude. I experienced the truth of Phœbe's remark, that happiness is a serious thing. While Pleasure manifests itself by extravagant gaiety, exuberant spirits, and

and overt acts, Happiness retreats to its own proper region—the heart. There concentrating its feelings, it contemplates its treasures, meditates on its enjoyments, and still more fondly on its hopes: counts up its mercies, and feels the consummation of them in looking to the fountain from whence they flow: feels every blessing immeasurably heightened by the heart-cheering reflection, that the most exquisite human pleasures are not the perfection of his nature, but only a gracious earnest, a bounteous relibation of that blessedness which is without measure, and shall be without end.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Before the Belfields had quitted us, it was stipulated that we should, with submission to the will of a higher, power all meet for six weeks every other summer at Stanley Grove, and pass a month together every intermediate year, either at the Priory or at Beechwood.

I passed through London, and spent three days in Cavendish-square, my friends having kindly postponed their departure for the country on my account. Lady Belfield voluntarily undertook whatever was necessary for the internal decoration of the Priory; while Sir John took on himself the friendly office of arranging for me all preliminaries with Mr. Stanley, whose largeness of heart and extreme disinterestedness, I knew I durst not trust, without some such check as I placed in the hands of our common friend.

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As soon as all personal concerns were adjusted, Lady Belfield said, "I have something to communicate, in which I am persuaded you will take a lively interest. On my return to town, I found, among my visiting tickets, several of Lady Melbury's. The porter told me she had called every day for the last week, and seemed very impatient for my return. Finding she was still in town, I went to her immediately. She was not at home, but came to me within an hour. She looked more beautiful than ever, at She expressed great joy at seeing me. least the blush of conscious shame, which mingled with her usual sweetness, rendered her more interesting.

"She was at a loss how to begin. With a perplexed air she said, 'Why did you stay so long? I have sadly wanted you. Where is Sir John? I have wanted counsellors—comforters—friends. I have never had a friend.'

"I was affected at an opening so unexpected. Sir John came in. This increased

her confusion. At length, after the usual compliments, she thus addressed him: 'I am determined to conquer this false shame. There is not a worse symptom in human nature than that we blush to own what we have been not afraid to do. From you, Sir John, I heard the first remonstrance which ever reached my ears. You ought to be informed of its effect. You cannot have forgotten our conversation in my coach*, after we had quitted the scene which filled you with contempt for me, and me with anguish for the part I had acted. You reasonably supposed that my remorse would last no longer than the scene which had inspired it. You left me alone. My Lord dined abroad. I was abandoned to all the horrors of solitude. I wanted somebody to keep me from myself. Mrs. Stokes dying; her husband dead; the sweet flower-girl pining for want—and I perhaps the cause of all! The whole view presented such a complication of misery to my mind, and

* See Vol. I. page 163.

of guilt to my heart, as made me insupportable to myself.

"'It was Saturday. I was of course engaged to the opera. I was utterly unfit to go, but wanted courage to frame an excuse. Fortunately Lady Bell Finley, whom I had promised to chaperon, sent to excuse herself. This set my person at liberty, but left my mind upon the rack. Though I should have rejoiced in the company even of my own chambermaid, so much did I dread being left to my own thoughts, yet I resolved to let no one in that night. I had scarcely passed a single evening out of the giddy circle for several years. For the first time in my life I was driven to look into myself. I took a retrospect of my past conduct; a confused and imperfect one indeed. This review aggravated my distress. Still I pursued my distracting self-inquisition. Not for millions would I pass such another night!

"'I had done as wrong things before, but they had never been thus brought home to me. My extravagance must have,

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made others suffer, but their sufferings had not been placed before my eyes. What was not seen, I had hoped might not be true. I had indeed heard distant reports of the consequences of my thoughtless expence, but they might be invented—they might be exaggerated. At the flower-maker's I *witnessed* the ruin I had made—I *saw* the fruits of my unfeeling vanity—I *beheld* the calamities I had caused. O how much mischief would such actual observation prevent! I was alone. I had no sycophant to divert my attention to more soothing objects. Though Sir John's honest expostulation had touched me to the quick, yet I confess, had I found any of my coterie at home, had I gone to the opera, had a joyous supper succeeded, all together would have quite obliterated the late mortifying scene. I should, as I have often done before, have soon lost all sense of the Stokes's misery, and of my own crime."

"Here," pursued Lady Belfield, "the

sweet

sweet creature looked so contrite, that Sir John and I were both deeply affected."

"'You are not accustomed, Sir John,' resumed she, with a faint smile, 'to the office of a confessor, nor I to that of a penitent. But I make it a test to myself of my own sincerity to tell you the whole truth.

"'I wandered from room to room fancying I should be more at ease in any other than that in which I was. I envied the starving tenant of the meanest garret. I envied Mrs. Stokes herself. Both might have pitied the pangs which rent my heart, as I roamed through the decorated apartments of our spacious house. In the gayest part of London I felt the dreariness of a desert. Surrounded with magnificence, I endured a sense of want and woe, of which a blameless beggar can form no idea.

"'I went into the library: I took up a book which my Lord had left on the table. It was a translation from a Roman classic. I opened it at the speech of the tragedian to

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Pompey: '*The time will come that thou shalt mourn deeply, because thou didst not mourn sooner!*' I was struck to the heart. 'Shall a pagan,' said I, 'thus forcibly reprove me; and shall I neglect to search for truth at the fountain?

"'I knew my Lord would not come home from his club till the morning. The struggle in my soul between principle and pride was severe! but after a bitter conflict, I resolved to employ the night in writing him a long letter. In it I ingenuously confessed the whole state of my mind, and what had occasioned it. I implored his permission for my setting out next morning for Melbury Castle. I intreated him to prevail on his excellent aunt Lady Jane, whom I had so shamefully slighted, to accompauy me. I knew she was a character of that singular class, who would be glad to revenge herself for my ill treatment by doing me a service. Her company would be at once a pledge to my Lord of the purity of my intentions, and to myself a security against falling into worse society.

ciety. I assured him that I had no safeguard but in flight. An additional reason which I alleged for my absence was, that as I had promised to give a grand masquerade in a fortnight, the evading this expence would nearly enable me to discharge the debt which sat so heavy on my conscience.

"'I received a note from him as soon as he came home. With his usual complaisance, he complied with my request. With his usual nonchalance, he neither troubled me with reproaches, nor comforted me with approbation.

"'As he knew that Lady Jane usually rose about the hour he came home from St. James's-street, he obligingly went to her at once. I had not been in bed. He came to my dressing room, and informed me that his aunt had consented at the first word. I expressed my gratitude to them both, saying, that I was ready to set out that very day.'"

"'You must wait till to-morrow,' said he: 'there is no accounting for the oddities of some people. Lady Jane told me she could

not

not possibly travel on a Sunday. I wondered where was the impossibility. Sunday, I assured her, was the only day for travelling in comfort, as the road was not obstructed by waggons and carts.' She replied, with a gaiety which made me laugh, 'that she should be ashamed to think that a person of her rank and education should be indebted for her being able to trample with more convenience on a divine law, to the piety of the vulgar who durst not violate it.' Did you ever hear any thing so whimsical, Matilda?' I said nothing, but my heart smote me. Never will I repeat this offence.

"'On the Monday we set out: I had kept close the preceding day, under pretence of illness. This I also assigned as an excuse in the cards sent to my invited guests, pleading the necessity of going into the country for change of air. Shall I own I dreaded being shut up in a barouche, and still more in the lonely castle, with Lady Jane? I looked for nothing every moment but 'the thorns and briars of reproof.' But I soon found that

the woman whom I had quizzed as a Methodist was a most entertaining companion. Instead of austerity in her looks, and reproach in her language, I found nothing but kindness and affection, but vivacity and elegance. While she soothed my sorrows, she strengthened my better purposes. Her conversation gradually revived in my mind tastes and principles which had been early sown in it, but which the world seemed completely to have eradicated.

" ' In the neighbourhood of the Castle, Lady Jane carried me to visit the abodes of poverty and sickness. I envied her large but discriminating liberality, and the means she possessed of gratifying it, while I shed tears at the remembrance of my own squandered thousands. I had never been hardhearted, but I had always given to importunity, rather than to want or merit. I blushed, that, while I had been absurdly profuse to cases of which I knew nothing, my own village had been perishing with a contagious sickness. '

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"'While I amused myself with drawing, my aunt often read to me some rationally entertaining book, occasionally introducing religious reading and discourse, with a wisdom and moderation which increased the effect of both. Knowing my natural levity and wretched habits, she generally waited till the proposal came from myself. At first when I suggested it, it was to please her; at length I began to find a degree of pleasure in it myself.

"'You will say I have not quite lost my romance. A thought struck me, that the first use I made of my pencil, should serve to perpetuate at least one of my offences. You know I do not execute portraits badly. With a little aid from fancy, which I thought made it allowable to bring separate circumstances into one piece, I composed a picture. It consisted of a detached figure in the back-ground of poor Stokes, seen through the grate of his prison on a bed of straw: and a groupe, composed of his wife in the act of expiring, Fanny bending over

a wreath of roses, withered with the tears she was shedding, and myself in the horrors in which you saw me,

Spectatress of the mischief I had made.

"'Wherever I go, this picture shall always be my companion. It hangs in my closet. My dear friends,' added she with a look of infinite sweetness, 'whenever I am tempted to contract a debt, or to give into any act of vanity or dissipation which may lead to debt, if, after having looked on this picture, I can pursue the project, renounce me, cast me off for ever!

"'You know Lady Jane's vein of humour. One day as we were conversing together, I confessed that at the very time I was the object of general notice, and my gaiety the theme of general envy, I had never known happiness. 'I do not wonder at it,' said she. 'Those who greedily pursue admiration, would be ashamed to sit down with so quiet a thing as happiness.' 'My dear Lady Jane,' said I, 'correct me,

me, counsel me, instruct me, you have been too lenient, too forbearing. 'Well,' said she, with a cheerful tone, 'as you appoint me your physician, as you disclose your case and ask for relief, I will give you a prescription, which, though the simplest thing in the world, will, I am certain, go a great way towards curing you. As you are barely six-and-twenty, your disease I trust is not inveterate. If you will be an obedient patient, I will answer for your recovery.

"'I assured her of my willing adoption of any remedy she might prescribe, as I was certain she would consider my weakness, and adapt her treatment, not so much to what my case absolutely required, as to what my strength was able to bear.

"'Well then,' said she—'But pray observe I am no quack. I do not undertake to restore you instantaneously. Though my medicine will work surely, it will work slowly. You know,' added she, smiling, 'the success of all alteratives depends on the punctuality with which they are taken, and the constancy with which they are fol-

lowed up. Mine must be taken two or three times a day, in small quantities at first; the dose to be enlarged as you are able to bear it. I can safely assert, with the advertising doctors, that it may be used full or fasting, in all weathers and all seasons; but I cannot add with them that *it requires no confinement*.'

"'I grew impatient, and begged she would come to the point. 'Softly, Matilda,' said she, 'softly; I must first look into my receipt book, for fear I should mistake any of my ingredients. This book,' said she, opening it, 'though written by no charlatan, contains a cure for all diseases. It exhibits not only general directions, but specified cases.' Turning over the leaves as she was speaking, she at length stopped, saying, 'here is your case, my dear, or rather your remedy.' She then read very deliberately—COMMUNE WITH YOUR OWN HEART—AND IN YOUR CHAMBER—AND BE STILL.'

"'I now found her grand receipt-book was the Bible. I arose, and embraced her. 'My dear aunt,' said I, 'do with me what-

ever

ever you please. I will be all obedience. I pledge myself to take your alterative regularly, constantly. Do not spare me. Speak your whole mind.'

"'My dear Matilda,' said she, 'ever since your marriage, your life has been one continued opposition to your feelings. You have lived as much below your understanding as your principles. Your conduct has been a system of contradictions. You have believed in Christianity, and acted in direct violation of its precepts. You knew that there was a day of future reckoning, and yet neglected to prepare for it. With a heart full of tenderness, you have been guilty of repeated acts of cruelty. You have been faithful to your husband, without making him respectable or happy. You have been virtuous, without the reputation or the peace which belongs to virtue. You have been charitable without doing good, and affectionate without having ever made a friend. You have wasted those attentions on the worthless, which the worthy would have delighted

to

to receive, and those talents on the frivolous which would have been cherished by the enlightened. You have defeated the use of a fine understanding by the want of common prudence, and robbed society of the example of your good qualities by your total inability to resist and oppose.— Inconsideration and vanity have been the joint cause of your malady. At your age, I trust it is not incurable. As you have caught it by keeping infected company, there is no possible mode of cure but by avoiding the contagious air they breathe. You have performed your quarantine with admirable patience. Beware, my dearest niece, of returning to the scene where the plague rages, till your antidote has taken its full effect.'

"'I will *never* return to it, my dear Lady Jane,' cried I, throwing myself into her arms. 'I do not mean that I will never return to town. My duty to my Lord requires me to be where he is, or where he wishes me to be. My residence will be the same, but my society will be changed.'

"'You please me entirely,' replied she. 'In resorting to religion, take care that you do not dishonour it. Never plead your piety to God as an apology for your neglect of the relative duties. If the one is soundly adopted, the others will be correctly performed. There are those who would delight to throw such a stigma on real Christianity, as to be able to report that it had extinguished your affections and soured your temper. Disappoint them, my sweet niece; while you serve your Maker more fervently, you must be still more patient with your husband. But while you bear with his faults, take care that you do not connive at them. If you are in earnest you must expect some trials. He who prepares these trials for you, will support you under them, will carry you through them, will make them instruments of his glory, and of your own eternal happiness.'

"'Lord Melbury's complaisance to my wishes,' replied I, 'has been unbounded. As he never controlled my actions, when they required control, I trust he will be

equally

equally indulgent now they will be less censurable. Alas! we have too little interfered with each other's concerns—we have lived too much asunder—who knows but I may recal him?' My tears would not let me go on—nor will they now,' added she, wiping her fine eyes.

"Sir John and I were too much touched to attempt to answer; at length she proceeded.

"'By adhering to Lady Jane's directions, I have begun to get acquainted with my own heart. Little did I suspect the evil that was in it. Yet I am led to believe that the incessant whirl in which I have lived, my total want of leisure for reflection, my excessive vanity, and complete inconsiderateness, are of themselves causes adequate to any effects which the grossest vices would have produced.

"'Last week my Lord made us a visit at the Castle. I gave him a warm reception; but he seemed rather surprised at the cold one which I gave to a large cargo of new French novels and German plays, which he

had been so good as to bring me. I did not venture to tell him that I had changed my course of study. Lady Jane charged me to avoid giving him the least disgust by any unusual gravity in my looks, or severity in my conversation. I exerted myself to such good purpose, that he declared he wanted neither cards nor company. I tried to let him see by my change of habits rather than by dry documents, or cold remonstrances, the alteration which had taken place in my sentiments. He was pleased to see me blooming and cheerful. We walked together, we read together; we became lovers and companions; he told Lady Jane he never saw me so pleasant. He did not know I was so agreeable a woman, and was glad he had this opportunity of getting acquainted with me. As he has great expectations from her, he was delighted at the friendship which subsisted between us.

"He brought us up to town. As it was now empty, the terrors of the masquerade no longer hung over me, and I

cheerfully,

cheerfully complied with his wishes. I drove immediately to Mrs. Stokes's with such a portion of my debt as my retirement had enabled me to save. I feasted all the way on the joy I should have in surprising her with this two hundred pounds. How severe but how just was my punishment, when on knocking at the door, I found she had been dead these two months. No one could tell what was become of her daughter. This shock operated almost as powerfully on my feelings as the first had done. But if it augmented my self-reproach, it confirmed my good resolutions. My preseet concern is how to discover the sweet girl whom, alas, I have helped to deprive of both her parents.'

"Here I interrupted her," continued Lady Belfield, saying, "You have not far to seek, Fanny Stokes is in this house. She is appointed governess to our children.

"Poor Lady Melbury's joy was excessive at this intelligence, and she proceeded: 'That a too sudden return to the world might not weaken my better pur-

poses I was preparing to request my Lord's permission to go back to the castle, when he prevented me, by telling me that he had an earnest desire to make a visit to the brave patriots in Spain, and to pass the winter among them, but feared he must give it up, as the state of the continent rendered it impossible for me to accompany him.

"'This filled my heart with joy. I encouraged him to take the voyage, assured him I would live under Lady Jane's observation, and that I would pass the whole winter in the country.'

"'Then you shall pass it with us at Beechwood, my dear Lady Melbury," cried Sir John and I, both at once, 'we will strengthen each other in every virtuous purpose. We shall rejoice in Lady Jane's company.'

"She joyfully accepted the proposal, not doubting her Lord's consent; and kindly said, that she should be doubly happy in a society at once so rational and so elegant.

"It was settled that she should spend with

with us the three months that Fanny Stokes and little Caroline are to pass at Stanley Grove. She desired to see Fanny to whom she behaved with great tenderness. She paid her the two hundred pounds, assuring her she had no doubt of being able to discharge the whole debt in the spring.

"I received a note from her the next day, informing me of her Lord's cheerful concurrence as well as that of Lady Jane. She added, that when she went up to dress, she had found on her toilette her diamond necklace, which her dear aunt had redeemed and restored to her, as a proof of her confidence and affection.—As Lady Melbury has for ever abolished her coterie, I have the most sanguine hope of her perseverance. All her promises would have gone for nothing, without this practical pledge of her sincerity."

When Lady Belfield had finished her little tale, I expressed, in the strongest terms, the delight I felt at the happy change in this charming woman. I could not forbear observing to Sir John, that as

Lady Melbury had been the "glass of fashion," while her conduct was wrong, I hoped she would not lose all her influence by its becoming right. I added with a smile, "in that case I shall rejoice to see the fine ladies turn their talent for drawing to the same moral account with this fair penitent. Such a record of their faults as she has had the courage to make of her's hanging in their closets, and perpetually staring them in the face, would be no unlikely means to prevent a repetition, especially if the picture is to be as visible as the fault had been."

CHAP

CHAP. XLIX.

THE next morning I resumed my journey northwards, and on the fourth day I reached the seat of my ancestors. The distant view of the Priory excited strong but mingled emotions in my bosom. The tender sorrow for the loss of the beloved society that I had once enjoyed under its roof, was a salutary check to the abundant joy arising from the anticipation of the blessings which awaited me there. My mind was divided between the two conflicting sentiments, that I was soon to be in possession of every material for the highest happiness—and that the highest happiness is short! May I ever live under the influence of that act of devout gratitude, in which, as soon as I entered the house, I

 dedicated

dedicated the whole of my future life to its divine Author, solemnly consecrating to his service, my time, my talents, my fortune; all I am and all I have!

I next wrote to Lucilla, with whom I continued to maintain a regular and animated correspondence. Her letters gratify my taste, and delight my heart, while they excite me to every thing that is good. This interchange of sentiment sheds a ray of brightness on a separation which every day is diminishing.

Mr. Stanley also has the goodness to write to me frequently. In one of my letters to him, I ventured to ask him how he had managed to produce in his daughter such complete satisfaction in his sober and correct habits of life; adding, that her conformity was so cheerful that it did not look so much like acquiescence as choice.

I received from Mr. Stanley the answer which follows:

Stanley Grove,
Sept. 1808.

"My dear Charles,

"As I wish to put you in possession of whatever relates to the mind of Lucilla, I will devote this letter to answer your enquiries respecting her cheerful conformity to what you call our "sober habits of life;" and her indifference to those pleasures which are usually thought to constitute the sole happiness of young women of a certain rank.

"Mrs. Stanley and I are not so unacquainted with human nature, as to have pretended to impose on her understanding, by attempting to breed her up in intire ignorance of the world, or in perfect seclusion from it. She often accompanied us to town for a short time. The occasional sight of London, and the frequent enjoyment of the best society, dissipated the illusions of fancy. The bright colours with which young imagination, inflamed by ignorance, report and curiosity, invests un-

known and distant objects, faded under actual observation. Complete ignorance and complete seclusion form no security from the dangers incident to the world, or for correct conduct at a distance from it. Ignorance may be the safety of an ideot, and seclusion the security of a nun. Christian parents should act on a more large and liberal principle, or what is the use of observation and experience? The French women of fashion, under the old regime, were bred in convents, and what women were ever more licentious than many of them, as soon as marriage had set them at liberty?

"I am persuaded that the best-intended formation of character, if founded on ignorance or deceit, will never answer. As to Lucilla, we have never attempted to blind her judgment. We have never thought it necessary to leave her understanding out of the question, while we were forming her heart. We have never told her that the world is a scene absolutely destitute of

 plea-

pleasure: we have never assured her that there is no amusement in the diversions which we disapprove. Even if this assurance had not been deceitful, it would have been vain and fruitless. We cannot totally separate her from the society of those who frequent them, who find their happiness in them, and whom she would hear speak of them with rapture.

"We went upon other grounds. We accustomed her to reflect that she was an intellectual creature; that she was an immortal creature; that she was a Christian.—That to an intellectual being, diversions must always be subordinate to the exercise of the mental faculties; that to an immortal being, born to higher hopes than enjoyments, the exercise of the mental faculties must be subservient to religious duties. That in the practice of a Christian, self-denial is the turning point, the specific distinction.—That as to many of the pleasures which the world pursues, Christianity requires her votaries to live above the

temptations

temptations which they hold out. She requires it the more especially, because Christians in our time, not being called upon to make great and trying sacrifices, of life, of fortune, and of liberty; and having but comparatively small occasions to evidence their sincerity, should the more cheerfully make the petty but daily renunciation of those pleasures which are the very element in which worldly people exist.

" We have not misled her by unfair and flattering representations of the Christian life. We have not, with a view to allure her to embrace it on false pretences, taught her that when religion is once rooted in the heart, the remainder of life is uninterrupted peace and unbroken delight; that all shall be perpetually smooth hereafter, because it is smooth at present. This would be as unfair as to shew a raw recruit the splendours of a parade-day, and tell him it was actual service. We have not made her believe that the established Christian has no troubles

to

to expect, no vexations to fear, no storms to encounter. We have not attempted to cheat her into religion, by concealing its difficulties, its trials, no, nor its unpopularity.

"We have been always aware, that to have enforced the most exalted Christian principles, together with the necessity of a corresponding practice, ever so often and so strongly, would have been worse than foolish, had we been impressing these truths one part of the day, and had in the other part, been living ourselves in the actual enjoyment of the very things against which we were guarding her. My dear Charles, if we would talk to young people with effect, we must, by the habits of which we set them the example, dispose them to listen, or our documents will be something worse than fruitless. It is really hard upon girls to be tantalized with religious lectures, while they are at the same time tempted to every thing against which they are warned; while the whole bent and bias of the family practice

are diametrically opposite to the principles inculcated.

"In our own case I think I may venture to affirm, that the plan has answered. We endeavoured to establish a principle of right, instead of unprofitable invective against what was wrong. Perhaps there can scarcely be found a religious family in which so few anathemas have been denounced against this or that specific diversion, as in ours. We aimed to take another road. The turn of mind, the tendency of the employment, the force of the practice, the bent of the conversation, the spirit of the amusement, have all leaned to the contrary direction, till the habits are gradually worked into a kind of nature. It would be cruel to condemn a creature to a retired life without qualifying her for retirement; next to religion, nothing can possibly do this but mental cultivation in women who are above the exercise of vulgar employments. The girl who possesses only the worldly acquirements—the singer and the dancer—when condemned to retirement,

may

may reasonably exclaim with Milton's Adam, when looking at the constellations,

> Why all night long shine these?
> Wherefore if none *behold?*

"Now the woman who derives her principles from the Bible, and her amusements from intellectual sources, from the beauties of nature, and from active employment and exercise, will not pant for *beholders*. She is no clamorous beggar for the extorted alms of admiration. She lives on her own stock. Her resources are within herself. She possesses the truest independence. She does not wait for the opinion of the world, to know if she is right; nor for the applause of the world, to know if she is happy.

"Too many religious people fancy that the infectious air of the world is confined to the ball-room, or the playhouse, and that when you have escaped from these, you are got out of the reach of its contagion. But the contagion follows wherever there is a human heart left to its own natural impulse.

And

And though I allow that places and circumstances greatly contribute to augment or diminish the evil; and that a prudent Christian will always avoid an atmosphere, which he thinks not quite wholesome; yet whoever lives in the close examination of his own heart, will still find something of the morbid mischief clinging to it, which will require constant watching, whatever be his climate or his company.

"I have known pious persons, who would on no account allow their children to attend places of gay resort, who were yet little solicitous to extinguish the spirit which these places are calculated to generate and nourish. This is rather a geographical than a moral distinction. It is thinking more of the place than of the temper. They restrain their persons; but are not careful to expel from their hearts the dispositions which excite the appetite, and form the very essence of danger. A young creature cannot be happy who spends her time at home in amusements

ments destined for exhibition, while she is forbidden to be exhibited.

"But while we are teaching them that Christianity involves an heroic self-denial; that it requires some things to be done, and others to be sacrificed, at which mere people of the world revolt; that it directs us to renounce some pursuits because they are wrong, and others because they are trifling—we should at the same time, let them see and feel, that to a Christian the religion of enjoyment is not so narrow and circumscribed, is not so barren and unproductive, nor the pleasures it produces so few and small, as th enemies of religion would insinuate. While early habits of self-denial are giving firmness to the character, strengthening the texture of the mind, and hardening it against ordinary temptations—the pleasures and employments which we substitute in the stead of those we banish, must be such as tend to raise the taste, to invigorate the intellect, to exalt the nature, and enlarge the

the sphere of enjoyment; to give a tone to the mind, and an elevation to the sentiments, which shall really reduce to insignificance the pleasures that are prohibited.

"In our own instance, I humbly trust, that, through the divine blesssing, perseverance has been its own reward. As to Lucilla, I firmly believe that right habits are now so rooted, and the relish of superior pleasures so established in her mind, that had she the whole range of human enjoyment at her command; had she no higher consideration, no fear of God, no obedience to her mother and me, which forbad the ordinary dissipations, she would voluntarily renounce them, from a full persuasion of their empty, worthless, unsatisfying nature, and from a superinduced taste for higher gratifications.

"I am as far from intending to represent my daughter as a faultless creature, as she herself is from wishing to be so represented. She is deeply conscious both of the corruption of her nature, and the deficiencies of her

life-

life. This consciousness I trust will continue to stimulate her vigilance, without which all religion will decline, and to maintain her humility, without which all religion is vain.

"My dear Charles! a rational scene of felicity lies open before you both. It is lawful to rejoice in the fair perspective, but it is safe to rejoice with trembling. Do not abandon yourself to the chimerical hope that life will be to you, what it has never yet been to any man—a scene of unmingled delight. This life so bright in prospect will have its sorrows. This life which at four and twenty seems to stretch itself to an indefieite length, will have an end. May its sorrows correct its allusions! May its close be the entrance on a life, which shall have no sorrows and no end.

"I will not say how frequently we talk of you, nor how much we miss you. Need I tell you that the person who says least on the subject, is not the one who least feels your absence? She writes by this post.

"Adieu,

"Adieu, my dear Charles! I am with great truth your attached friend, and hope before Christmas to subscribe myself your affectionate father,

"FRANCIS STANLEY."

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Delightful hope! as Miss Stanley, when that blessed event takes place, will resign her name, I shall resume mine, and joyfully renounce for ever that of

CŒLEBS.

THE END.

J. & E. Hodson,
Cross Street, Hatton Garden, London.